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To the P U B L I C.

THE following is a Treatise of singular Importance to Religion, well deserving to be communicated to the Learned, and to be received by all Persons who desire to be true Disciples and Servants of Jesus Christ; wherein many common Notions are noted, and proved to be spurious and false; very material and interesting Principles of Religion are explained, and set forth in the clearest Light; our Christian Knowledge is greatly improved, according as the Truth in the Gospel: The whole, in the plainest Manner, well suited to all Capacities, to inform and edify Christians; intended for private and public Utility, the Honour and Increase of true Believers; proposed as very advantageous and necessary to give Men a right Understanding of all Pretences to the Holy Spirit; and published as the most probable Means to banish corrupt Notions out of our Thoughts, by suppressing the wild and impure Torrent of Enthusiasm.

E R R A T A.

Page xvi in the Introduction, line 29, for *its*, read, *the* real worth.

Page 1, line 6, for *of*, read, *in* Regeneration.

N. B. In page 7, the reader is referred to p. 245, 246, &c.

Page 20, line 1, read, *it* appears.

Page 42, line 2, for *local*, read, or *substantial* presence.

Page 49, line 26, after *local*, add, and *substantial* presence.

Page 53, line 15, for *man*, read, *men*.

Page 59, line 15, for *comprehensive*, read, *incomprehensible*.

Page 60, line 20, for *that*, read, *who*.

Page 68, line 22, see Luke xi. 13. instead of Luke ii. 13.

Page 142, line 13, read, *attempted*.

Page 147, line 19, read, "by the Law, or *Act of Toleration*," for that is the Law there under consideration.

Page 153, line 3, instead of, from *thee*, read, from *you*.

Page 163, line 7, for *mean*, read, *men*.

Page 209, line 18, for *say*, read, *saying*.

Page 220, line 3, for *unaccountable*, read, *accountable*.

Page 270, line 11, read, which *may* prove.

Page 281, line 16, read, *prepossessed*.

N. B. In page 310, line 11, the reader is referred back to p. 171, 172, &c.



ENTHUSIASM

DETECTED, DEFEATED.

WITH PREVIOUS

CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING

REGENERATION, the OMNIPRESENCE
of GOD, and DIVINE GRACE, &c.

By *SAMUEL ROE*, A. M. ✕
VICAR of STOTFOLD, in *Bedfordshire*.

CAMBRIDGE,

Printed for the AUTHOR, by FLETCHER and HODSON:

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in Pall-Mall; and M. HINGESTON, near Temple-Bar,
London.

MDCCLXVIII.

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BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, A.M.

VICAR OF STOTFORD, IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

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And by S. Crowder, in Brick-row, 1. Docton,
in Finsbury; and M. Johnson, near Temple-Bar,
London.

MDCCLXXXIII

TO THE
FRIENDLY READER.

THERE seems to be an absolute necessity for removing several inconsistent principles out of the present system of divinity, and for reforming some parts of the Liturgy now in use; as such stumbling blocks will always keep mankind in ignorance and errors, in contending and disputing, without ever being able to come to the knowledge of the truth: These are my endeavours; and how happily they may contribute to promote the sacred cause of true religion and virtue, I leave

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for

for the candid and ingenuous part of mankind to determine. And in regard to what may be desired, I beg leave to assure you, that this Treatise, though it lead you out of the common path, will safely conduct you, as a sure guide, into the direct light and true knowledge of those particular points therein specified, far beyond any thing I ever yet perused on the same subjects. And further, it may be observed, there is nothing foreign to the purpose considered, or mentioned in the Title, but may amply gratify the expectations of the most curious or inquisitive reader, may corroborate the evidence, and may support the truth of my dissertations on these critical and long-mistaken notions;—whatever some persons may surmise concerning these nice speculations. I have endeavoured to be very full and clear in the execution of my design, asserting the true worth and excellency

cellency of the Scriptures, removing the weight of all objections to render useless, or to depreciate, the true value of those sacred, inestimable oracles.— There is now no room left to doubt, that the pretences to internal impulses and motions of the Holy Spirit in man, are demonstrated to be inconsistent, groundless, and false; whereby the whole basis and system of the Quakers religion falls to the ground; and, in the main, doth effectually prove the entire overthrow of all Enthusiasm, which hath ever been the greatest enemy to true religion:

As I am concerned with different persons and authors, you may find the same texts of Scripture explained in several places, as most agreeable to take off the force of their intended application, and to enforce their true intention; but are considered in other distinct lights,

lights, not to incommode your prospect, but rather to strengthen and illustrate the point in view. I design not to entertain you with fancies or traditions; but with sound judgment, supported by reason and Scripture.

You are desired to observe, that the **Reply* was sent some years ago to the Printer of the London Chronicle, to be inserted, for the use of his readers, in answer to Mr. J. W—l-y, who published a kind of triumphal dissertation against a supposed Roman Catholic Gentleman. See Lond. Chron. April 4, 1761.

Bold as Mr. J. W—l-y appears, in his assertions concerning the inward teaching of the Spirit, no Christians are bound to take his word for it, or to stand in fear of his amazing threats,

* Vide p. 119.

who

who reject his dogmatical faith. Please to give the following debate but a candid reading, and consider how little reason any one can have for trusting to his documents, or running wild upon his authority, as if he were an Apostle, or one who was more infallible! Permit me now, in this friendly manner, to offer you some further considerations for clearing up this point of debate, which appeared too long to be inserted in the Chronicle; and therefore I have reserved it to be published as a volume of much greater importance, whereof the Reply to Mr. J. W—l-y was the principal foundation of the contest: and the latter part, or *Addenda*, is a plain demonstration of my former assertions, proving the inward teaching of the Spirit to be groundless and false, both against Quakers and Methodists.

Among

Among the great variety of persons into whose hands this may fall, it is to be hoped I shall give no offence to any one, for my having thus clearly asserted and defended the truth, by Scripture rightly interpreted, to the best of my own understanding and skill; and, with submission, whatever I may be defective in I leave to candid and learned judges. Nor do I design to disturb the repose of those persons who wish well to the present Establishment, as I myself most sincerely do, and have its interest so much at heart, as to endeavour the future peace and prosperity of the Church; and have fixed upon some points I should be glad to see referred to the consideration of a Convocation, should it please our most gracious Sovereign, and the Ministers of State, to appoint an Assembly of Divines to consult the improvement of our Liturgy,

to

to promote the honour of God's pure worship, the welfare of true religion, and the increase of our Protestant Church: Nor will it appear, from what I have offered, that I am dissatisfied with the old Forms; but only with such parts as may be liable to give offence to truth and to sound doctrine; and that I shall not make any of the Clergy my antagonists: but such as are inflexibly bent to stick in the old beaten paths, if more refined notions may not take place with their dispositions, that shall not displease me; but rather engage me to a stricter love and adherence to all that, I am convinced, is truly beneficial, just, and commendable.

THE
INTRODUCTION.

THE Clergy of the Established Church are certainly a very respectable body of learned men : They are justly esteemed the bulwark of the Reformation ; and that ever-memorable transaction hath contributed a peculiar eminency and brightness to their characters. They have not only exceeded those who went before them, as men of genius, in most parts of human literature, but more particularly in many excellent Treatises and Sermons, which they have published, to the encouragement of learning and true religion, to the honour of God and the welfare of the Christian Church ; so as their labours have not been in vain.

But notwithstanding these just observations, they, as well as the most studious and reading
part

part of our Laymen, are seemingly too rigid (if I may be allowed the expression) in adhering to some singular tenets, which come recommended unto us on no better footing, than that they were successively received, and had passed current, both before and after the Reformation. Now, the great improvements which have been made in the Christian community since that glorious æra, by suppressing the superstitions and errors of the Church of Rome, may tempt some of the present age to esteem themselves as discerning and orthodox, in matters of Scripture knowledge and divinity, as can well be imagined; since the Holy Bible is freely indulged and recommended to our people, as the sole rule of faith and practice among Protestants: And granting the whole body of Protestants should generally concur in the same judgment concerning their opinions, hence they may possibly think themselves to be no less infallible than his Holiness, if that title belongs to any mortal. But, I profess, from that knowledge and conversation which I have had with the various denominations of people in the circle of my acquaintance, and in general with the works of very learned, good authors, there is, I must confess, an overflowing stream of virulent and enthusiastic notions very discernible, too deeply implanted in their minds, and too indelible to be easily erased for characters of truer and brighter impressions. A person of a right, sound judgment, free from prejudice and partiality, may readily discover many inconsistent opinions concerning several material points of religion,

religion, and will be apt to hear such to be frequently supported in conversation, as well as what he may observe to appear openly in print; particularly concerning God's Holy Spirit, and his operations with Christians—likewise in the use of the word Inspiration—in praying for the Holy Ghost to be given—also concerning his inward aid and assistance—about divine Grace and Regeneration—and concerning God's Omnipresence;—with some other points too obvious to be here inserted: as to this last, you will find I have treated of it according to those clear expressions and manifestations in Scripture, without the help of human aid and sophistry.

The learned Dr. Clarke, with great assiduity and no less ingenuity, hath endeavoured to inform our inquisitive minds in the nature of God's Omnipresence, but hath set it forth in a very wrong light; because, if his notions concerning this attribute be made the general standard of God's immense Being and Omnipresence, we must set aside Scripture, and argue upon the like weak foundation of human authority and invention, which can never direct and settle our understandings in these divine and speculative points of knowledge. I say then, if God, the Supreme Being, be immense and omnipresent, in Dr. Clarke's sense, viz. fills infinite space; God could not possibly create the world out of nothing, for his Essence must be every where; by an absolute necessity of nature, all and every thing must be created in his own Essence, and not out of nothing,
contrary

contrary to the whole authority of Scripture ; and when created, God and Matter must be so confused together, and all other Spirits with himself, that they must be inseparable. And to add the greater weight to this common notion, he hath recourse to the authority of an Apostle, whose words, if he did not rightly understand, they are most certainly applied in a mistaken sense and to a wrong purpose by him, to prove God's immense Being and Presence to be every where, viz. " In him we live, and move, and have our being : " by which words I understand no more, than that through his providence, by his power, wisdom, and goodness, we live, move, and have our being. Were his sense of the words true, then the Devils are in God too, and, *vice versa* :—A consequence undeniable, blasphemous as it is ! Innumerable absurdities must follow from such an Omnipresence. No wonder such notions of God should make an Anti-Trinitarian ; because there could no more be Three Persons in one such Being, than there could be three solid globes in one and the same globe. Supposing infinite space was one solid globe, that globe must be equal with God ; one, and not three.—
—More of this attribute in another place.

But to return—It doth very frequently happen in conversation, that the Spirit of God is the subject matter of discourse between intimate friends. Now, to prevent common prejudices and disputes on such controverted points, I lay this down as an excellent method and rule, a caution of very
great

great service, if well observed, and it is this : So sure as I hear any one talking of the Spirit of God not being irresistible, and working in us not irresistibly, I am certain such an one is wrong in his understanding, and weak in judgment : and for this reason, men had need be very cautious how they think, speak, or write, concerning God's Holy Spirit ; must never attempt to add *not irresistible* and *not irresistibly* with it ; for two such absurd, inconsistent expressions, can never comport in terms together.

For my own part, I confess, my reason and judgment can never be prevailed upon to imagine, the God of all power, wisdom, and goodness, would ever send, or give his Holy Spirit to us, on purpose for our good and salvation, and leave it in the power of us, weak mortals as we are, to frustrate his good intentions, to render the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit ineffectual and vain, or for us to resist such power and goodness of God : “ For who hath resisted his will ? ” Now observe again, because the Grace of God is not the immediate act of his Holy Spirit, therefore we are free agents. It is most certain, God hath freely given us the means of Grace, and hath put all those means in our power, (which are the ordinary, universal instructions of the holy Scriptures, and not the immediate effects of his Spirit,) and we may use or abuse them, as we please.

And tho' I cannot fall into the common way of thinking, I intend no indecent reflections on those

those who do: But it is certain, there are too many vulgar and mysterious notions had in esteem, of great disservice to truth and sound religion, which would be well, very well, were they banished entirely from the minds and writings of Christian men. I propose not to expose them with censure and ridicule, but to explain and rectify our determinations concerning some particular tenets, which I shall have occasion to treat on. 'Tis true, I have not the advantages to improve in the just manner of writing in so polite and correct a stile as could be desired; yet if I write sensible, plain, and material truths, which I have newly discovered, to correct human failings, to rectify our understandings, and to improve our Christian knowledge, it would be great pity my observations should lie concealed under a bushel, or useful talents be laid up in a napkin; because I can have no assistance from the learned, the curious, or great, in the progress of so noble a design; but in an imperious mood I have been told, to let old forms (and if errors) be as they are, and to keep my opinions to myself. So affronting as this may seem, I must let you understand, I have not that mean spirit to drop so good a cause, when I have the advantage to attack, and even to repel the outrageous spirit of Enthusiasm, which never yet was defeated, or so much as attempted, by all the wit and art of mankind, in the manner it is here discovered, and proved to be senseless, inconsistent, and absurd, to the eternal overthrow and entire annihilation of all arguments in its defence: When behold further,

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all those texts of Scripture, which Methodists and Enthusiasts ground their faith upon, are wretchedly mistaken, perverted; and misapplied, to support their pretences to the Holy Spirit, or to any such unaccountable aids and assistances they may pretend to be gifted with; all which pretences are eternally profane, chimerical, and false.

On the whole, therefore, I presume, no other method can be more effectual to prove the thing proposed; or more conducive to give the minds of men a right understanding of the real stupidity and impiety of what we term Enthusiasm. But in what manner soever this scheme may be favoured, I deserve, at least, the credit of having designed well; as it appears to be a laborious and generous undertaking, contrived and effected from a pure desire to see the unhappy contentions and divisions among Protestants abated, and true religion promoted. Wherefore it must be acknowledged; I have freely dedicated my time, my trouble, and expences, to this commendable purpose; and may the public reap all the neat and eminent advantages, which can possibly be desired from a work of this nature: And tho' there be no great names or patrons here affixed, to give some weight and reputation to this impression, it will stand in need of no other protection or recommendation, than what ariseth purely from its real worth, singular use, and important services it may be of to the Christian world in general.

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CONSIDERATIONS
CONCERNING
REGENERATION.

IN consequence of some conversation I lately had with a very studious Clergyman, who would hear no talk of leaving the old beaten tracks, like most other men and authors, unwilling to give way to opponents; this general opinion, concerning the Holy Spirit of Regeneration, made part of our discourse; and he wanted not authors to support the current tradition, viz. That the Holy Ghost doth regenerate us in our Baptism; and to which I offer this well-grounded Reply.

Let it be remembered, that the word Spirit, is, by a very usual figure in holy Scripture, put to express the Effects of the Spirit; and cannot rightly be interpreted, in very many places, to signify the Holy Spirit of God in a direct sense; as an immediate power, act, or cause, relating

to persons or things: but must be taken in a more remote sense; referring only to the general Effects produced by the natural and ordinary means of the Holy Spirit. As for instance; John, iii. 5. "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Which, as I humbly apprehend, meaneth, that unless a man be regenerate, and taken off from his vain conversation in the world, by means of the word and doctrine of the Gospel, (which was the undoubted *Effect* of the Holy Spirit of God upon the blessed Evangelists and Apostles,) and is baptized with water, he cannot be a disciple of Christ, a member and partaker of the Gospel covenant; in our blessed Saviour's own words, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And the verse following intimateth to us the vast difference between the State of Nature, and the State of Grace; the impossibility of entering into the State of Grace, without the Regeneration of the Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." That which we derive from our natural parents is fleshly and corrupt; and that which we derive from the Spirit of Grace, that is, from the Word of God, and the Christian institution of Water Baptism, is spiritual and holy: we enter

ter then into a new Birth, and a new spiritual Life ; we contract to ourselves new and spiritual parents, God and the Church ; we are born again according to the Scripture sense of Regeneration, and become the adopted sons of God : whereby all Christians are entituled in a peculiar manner to call God, Our Heavenly Father. As our blessed Saviour taught and commanded his disciples, when ye pray to say, " Our Father, &c. From whence, by the bye, I judge it highly improper, and very presumptuous for any persons, who are not baptized according to Christ's holy institution, to pray in that form, or in like words. For how can they call God " Our Father," who will not enter into covenant with him, and become his adopted Children ? How can they pray, " Hallowed be thy Name," who wilfully disown his Name and Authority ? or how can they pray, " Thy kingdom come," who contemptuously refuse to be members of God's church and kingdom here on earth ? or how can they pray, " Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," who presumptuously oppose his divine institution, and disobey his will ? This is not unworthy the serious consideration of all Dissenters. Pardon this digression, as it commodiously dropt in my way ; and I proceed to my present argument.

From

From this discourse of our blessed Saviour with Nicodemus, there plainly appeareth a necessity of Regeneration, asserted in the strongest terms; "Verily, verily," repeated over and over; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." From whence some Divines, if I may term them so, are apt to conclude as great and indispensable a necessity, for some extraordinary operation of the Holy Spirit; that a man cannot be born again, or be regenerate in the Gospel sense, without an immediate Descent and Communication of the Holy Spirit unto him: but such a notion is altogether chimerical, inconsistent, and false. For our blessed Saviour in those words meaneth nothing like it; but indeed asserteth the direct contrary, and leaveth it, not to the Spirit, as the immediate Cause, but to the mere Effects of the Spirit, to the light of the Gospel, as the natural and ordinary means of Regeneration; as the sound and preaching of the Gospel, may very fitly be compared to a wind; thus our blessed Saviour afterwards explaineth himself, v. 7, 8. and in this sense he speaketh to Nicodemus. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence

whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." So the wind of God's word, the sound and preaching of the Gospel, goeth forth whither the Spirit listeth. Men hear the sound thereof, and some are taken with it; they listen to it and embrace it: in some such manner it is, (or, as our blessed Saviour speaketh) "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." So true is that prophecy, Ps. xix. 3, 4. "There is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world." And the apostle St. Paul applies the same words to the times and preaching of the gospel. Rom. x. 18. "But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

Now to confirm this sense and interpretation of Scripture, let us next observe how mankind were at first prevailed upon to be regenerate in our blessed Saviour's sense, and to become Christians. Was it by any immediate Act and Power of the Holy Spirit, upon the souls and bodies of men? No such thing! 'Twas merely the Effect of the blessed apostles, of their preaching the word and gospel of Christ. And the same may be gathered from the divine commission which

which our blessed Lord gave to his apostles, Mark, xvi. 15. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." v. 16. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Here it is expressly said, "He that believeth," that is, "Who believeth the word and gospel which ye preach, and is baptized, (there is the spiritual Regeneration,) shall enter into the kingdom of God, i. e. shall be saved. But he who believeth not, and is not baptized, (be it thro' his own obstinacy or infidelity) shall be damned." Hence it is very plain, that the Scripture doctrine and sense of Regeneration, doth not imply any immediate act and power of the Holy Ghost, conferred on believers, by which alone they are regenerate, and made the children of God; but we may plainly see and know this upon the clearest testimony, to be the Effect only of the word of God, and, by an usual figure in Scripture, is attributed to the Spirit. In this rhetorical sense, I understand the words of our Liturgy, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit," i. e. by means of God's word, of his holy institution and covenant; to receive — for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate — into thy holy Church. Be it observed,

served, if our Church Divines mean these words to be used in the sacred phraseology, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant," viz. intend thereby the great benefits and blessings only of the Christian doctrine and institution, 'tis well and sufficient; but if they mean more by the expression, and would have it to be used for the Holy Spirit himself, it is absurd, most inconsistent, as every one may easily perceive. I have shewn in another place, that it is not becoming of us, to ask of God, or to pray to him, to give his Holy Spirit. Besides, I appeal to the common reason and understanding of all men, whether it be not most absurd, to address ourselves solemnly in prayers to God, for to give his Holy Spirit to an infant, who is neither capable of knowing either good or evil, or of willing and doing right or wrong. Then, why should we request any thing of God in our prayers, which our own reason will naturally inform us, can be of no use to direct, rule, or govern such infants; or to enable them to teach, reform, and guide other Christians, or to profit the Church withal; and who have not capacities of sufficient growth and maturity, to make use of the ordinary common means of salvation afforded by the Gospel. What then! You'll say, To sanctify and regenerate them, that thereby they may be saved. I answer,
If

If a person cannot be a Christian, or cannot possibly be regenerate and be saved without God's giving the Holy Spirit to him, then I say, Christ died in vain; the apostles preached up faith, obedience, and repentance, as necessary means of salvation, in vain, and to no purpose; the Gospel, the sacrament of Baptism, with all other ordinary means, can no longer be of any use or benefit, without the Spirit, which I term *Entheism*. Besides, if the Regeneration of such tender infants is solely and purely the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, then such act is certainly irresistible in such infants; they of themselves are unable to refuse the good, and chuse the evil; or to refuse the evil, and chuse the good: they have neither power to know or discern what the grace of God, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mean and import; nay they cannot will or reject what is, or shall be, done for them, and so cannot oppose or resist their Regeneration: how much less, were it effected by the immediate communication and power of the Holy Ghost! We all see, and know, they are entirely ignorant and insensible of any extraordinary communications, or of any change wrought in them by the Spirit, at the time of the new birth in Baptism; or at what instant, and in what manner the Spirit doth effect it for them: and on the

the whole, so are the parents, so are the sponsors; so are the whole congregation; and so is the priest himself, as insensible of the matter, as the new-born child itself is, or can be: wherefore, I am fully persuaded, such an immediate power and communication of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration, is a mere senseless, enthusiastic notion: it doth appear to be a kind of spiritual infatuation, or priestcraft, to say no worse of it; being void of reason, void of scripture truly interpreted, and void of experience, to support it. And I do affirm the same of adult persons, as well as of infants: that there is no necessity of any descent, or immediate communication of the Holy Spirit in Baptism; that they are as truly, as thoroughly, regenerate and born again, by means of the written Word of God, (as I shall plainly shew you from St. Peter) upon faith in the divine assurances and undoubted veracity of the holy Scripture; and in obedience to their authority, persons of all denominations, whether men, women, or children, are dedicated and consecrated to God, are regenerated by Water-Baptism, and are admitted the members of the Church of Jesus Christ: the Spirit being no more to be considered here, in this action, than as the author and revealer of God's will, thro' whom all the duties and institutions of religion

are transmitted down to us, and to all mankind, in the Gospel: by the administration of which holy sacrament, and not by any motions or immediate communications of the Holy Spirit, they are received into the congregation of Christ's flock, and are thereby freely made partakers of all the benefits peculiarly belonging to the Christian covenant, and to the Christian church, which only hath Christ for the author, and God for the security of our salvation. They are thus spiritually born again: they are as much, as truly regenerate, by means of God's word, and the administration of the holy sacrament of Baptism, as ever they can be; and that too, as is very evident, through faith and repentance, without any pretended communication and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit.

Now for argument's sake, supposing I were to allow it to be the general opinion of all Christendom, that the Holy Ghost, as the immediate cause, did, by an almighty power, secretly effect our Regeneration in Baptism, &c. that universal persuasion would no more be an infallible proof of the truth and certainty of an almighty and spiritual act of the Holy Ghost being the immediate and sole cause of our Regeneration, than that traditional and vulgar opinions are always

infallibly

infallibly true. And yet the above supposition is the current sense of Divines, or we know not what they mean. Notwithstanding, to any candid and unprejudiced minds, this notion will appear, upon the clearest demonstration, to be false, from what I have briefly offered, concerning our Regeneration, Divine Grace, &c. because there is neither reason, or experience to prove, that these are effected by any immediate acts of the Holy Ghost: and I am certain, Scripture truly interpreted will serve as little to this purpose. Besides, there are not the least footsteps, or intimations made in the sacred records, of any descent of the Holy Ghost in the Regeneration, or New Birth; nor of any immediate communication, inspiration, or renovation manifested by the same Holy Spirit, on the person regenerate: there is no promise made, there is no rule, no light given to us, to direct and inform Christians, in what manner, or by what tokens we can be assured the Holy Ghost doth descend and operate, in order to effect this new birth, or change in our nature; and therefore we can have no grounds from Scripture to believe our Regeneration to be an immediate act or operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Eternal Spirit of God is a Being of infinite

finite power and glory : an immediate operation and act of his, would not appear like as the weak efforts of nature, but must necessarily be attended with preternatural circumstances of great power and demonstration of the Spirit, above the ordinary course of nature; as was evident by the holy apostles, and by those who had but the gifts only of the Spirit. But our Regeneration truly and properly considered, appears to be no act, or work of the Holy Ghost, but to be merely the effect of the Word and Ministry. By being born of the Spirit, we must not understand the Holy Spirit as the immediate, but as a remote cause; that is, by means of the word, and entering into covenant with God by the sacrament of Baptism: and this, as I apprehend, is all that is intended by Regeneration, and is what the Scripture truly meaneth, by being born of water and of the Spirit; which the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of all truth, abundantly verifieth, and expressly confirmeth, by St. Peter, Epist. i. 23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Can there be any greater evidence? or can there be any demonstration more infallible? This testimony of the Holy Spirit (beyond all the traditions and suggestions of vain men) setteth the plain truth before our eyes; this
rationally

rationally convincteth us, and certainly discovereth to us, what Regeneration is, and how it is effected: The other, a supposition only, that it is the effect of some spiritual operation of the Holy Ghost, not discoverable by any, or how to be accounted for; which, if it were true, yet never doth, or can, let us know, how the work of Regeneration is performed in us, but leaveth us in *statu quo*, and entirely in the dark; and therefore ought to be esteemed a senseless, enthusiastic notion, without foundation, perverting the sense of Scripture; a vulgar error, void of any truth or certainty, as in very deed it is. But in the manner I have explained Regeneration; there is all the truth and reasonableness that can be desired in the nature of things, to inform our understandings, and enough to convince mankind, that they have long entertained an opinion to be abhorred, to be abandoned by all Christians, much rather than to be defended or inculcated against the sense of Scripture, to offend and perplex the minds of men therewith. From hence it appears, that the compilers of our Liturgy were men very wrong in their judgments, and mistaken in their compositions; who undoubtedly had an enthusiastic disposition, and a strange model of notions in these necessary parts of Christian knowledge; which also is too obvious and discernible

cernible in those persons who are not a little prejudiced in favour of their compositions, who generally frame their own system of notions after the direct plan of those Divines, who have long before followed the same paths of their forefathers, whether right or wrong; and men of these days think it a most arrogant stride of presumption, to oppose or to call in question the orthodoxy of their principles, which have gained such sure footing. But resolved I am, not to follow them by the Spirit, nor any further than the clear sense of Scripture will bear them out; in which case any one may take them for safe guides: on the contrary, when men are guided by the fond notions of the Holy Spirit, they are sure to be wrong, which must frequently happen, when men are so seemingly very fond of such impositions. I intend to be no accuser of the ancient Fathers of our Church, but am clearly satisfied they were fallible and wrong in their notions: As if men were always to be inspired; see The XIII. Article of Religion, The Collect for the 5th Sunday after Easter, and The Collect in the Communion Office preceding the Ten Commandments—The Holy Ghost to be for ever descending, see Collects, for the Sunday before Lent, and for the Sunday after Ascension-day—And as if infants were to be baptized with the
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Holy Ghost, see The Prayers in Infant-baptism— and were to have the Holy Ghost given to them, see The XVI. Article of Religion, which implieth, from the title, that we receive the Holy Ghost in Baptism, by these express terms, “After we have received the Holy Ghost.” This appears to be an unaccountable presumption, or a notorious mistake, which none living will ever be able to make good, without a miracle to prove it. Wherefore I do heartily wish, such dangerous notions and expressions were entirely laid aside, though it be the standard doctrine of the Established Church.

Another general foible the compilers of our Liturgy seemed very fond of, concerning Inspiration! and I cannot omit taking notice, that the like unaccountable opinion was much adhered to by a learned body of Divines, with as little foundation, either from Scripture or reason; which doth greatly tend to promote the spirit of Enthusiasm: as I frequently find the Clergy who preach amongst the Methodists plead, that our established Book of Common Prayer maintains the same doctrines as they do; that they teach no other points than what our Church alloweth; but more strictly!—We have this remarkable instance of our English Divines praying for the inspiration

piration of the Holy Spirit, who seemingly aim to outvie the compilers of our Liturgy making too free with the words "Inspired" and "Inspiration," as such terms mean a supernatural, immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit. — See the particular Acts and Adjournments of the Convocation, from December 4th, 1689. — The Litany was read by a Bishop, for some days in Latin, there being only this supplication added, after the prayers for the Bishops, "*That it may please thee to inspire, with thy Holy Spirit, this Convocation, and to preside over it, to lead us into all Truth, which is according to Godliness.*"

Here you find the expectations of these learned Divines were altogether solicitous for the Spirit of inspiration; as if the whole Christian Church were to be directed by their Assembly, and the prayer in our Litany seemed insufficient for their business: which I look upon as very excellent and proper, viz. "That it may please thee to illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy word, and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth, and shew it accordingly." A request in very moderate and becoming terms! incomparably beyond that LITTLE addi-

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tion they made to it for themselves, which seems to be unnatural, very unbecoming the wisdom and good sense of eminent Divines; while there appears no reason or necessity for such an additional supply of supernatural assistance. That the Holy Spirit of God should preside over their meeting, and inspire them!—Be astonished. Under the enthusiasm of such a divine power, who knows but they might duly have called the authority of the twelve apostles in question? how dangerous do such high-flown addresses appear? Why truly, this was very inconsiderate and idle, seeing they had so perfect a revelation of God's will to consult, and to direct them, and for those (whom we may imagine as Protestants, to be guilty of,) men, who truly acknowledge the Scriptures to be an infallible rule of faith and practice; when moreover, there appears not any the least grounds to expect God should grant them the favour of such an extraordinary request; he having for so many centuries withdrawn his Spirit from the Church, and having supplied the want of inspiration with the written word. Had the gift of inspiration, and the extraordinary powers of the Holy Ghost, been frequent now, as with the holy apostles, it might have appeared agreeable in such a miraculous age; but in this, it perfectly savoureth of rank enthusiasm, and tendeth to

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encourage enthusiasts, who still pretend to the inward teaching and extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit. This doctrine, instead of conforming with the Spirit and word of God, is directly contradicting both; it is the power of delusion, and the spirit of Antichrist; seeing there are no inward operations of the Holy Ghost, there are no inspired men; nor must it be expected that the Holy Ghost should be perpetually descending, or at every entreaty should be inspiring men.

It gives me great concern, to find men of learning and good sense transgress the bounds of decency, and wander out of the right paths of truth and reason. Undoubtedly, if any one, and much more, if every member of the Convocation, had been inspired with the Holy Spirit of truth, this nation could have expected nothing less than a more perfect, or an entire new Liturgy. But after all, nothing to any purpose was done: they left the Liturgy as they found it, and the Spirit them. Wherefore it is high time to discard such wild, fantastical notions, seeing there is an interval of so many ages continued down from the holy apostles, which has been entirely destitute of any inspiration.

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Such extraordinary flights of imagination, I mean, calling down the Holy Ghost, and praying for inspiration, seem sufficient to subvert the written word, and to turn all religion into enthusiasm; and you may easily discern there is so much danger, in the like unguarded expressions, and unaccountable notions.

Here you are acquainted with my just sentiments, free from guile, void of partiality or flattery; and though I have as great a tenderness for the present establishment as any man living, yet, I declare honestly, I can bear no affection for error, but most earnestly desire to see the truth established, promoted, and our Liturgy amended.

Such is the express meaning of those terms before cited and referred to, whenever the reverend fathers speak of these mysteries; and, I am apprehensive, will prove to any one, as well as to myself, a sufficient demonstration that they were over warm in their opinions, through prejudice against new notions, and thro' want of consideration; and by the same natural failings all men are liable to the like errors and impositions. Nevertheless, in concerns of this general na-

ture, and grand importance to mankind, appears very strange to me, that these impositions should be continued down to posterity; that some one among all the learned men in every age (for I suppose these notions were spread by rank enthusiasts of old time, in the very infancy of Christianity,) should never attempt a discovery, and endeavour to give the world a right understanding of these spiritual and catholic concerns.

It is true, the present raging spirit of enthusiasm, and the affinity which our Church seemed to bear to their principles, put me upon a serious consideration concerning these important affairs, and I heartily wish my endeavours may prove successful to the same good ends I proposed to myself, viz. to fix our knowledge upon a right sense and interpretation of Scripture; for the promotion of true religion, for the suppression of all enthusiasm, and for the universal satisfaction of all mankind, who may be doubtful under such like difficulties. Now, I sincerely assure you, for these purposes just mentioned, I humbly offer my labours to the public, for the more ready and greater confirmation of truth; hoping they will not appear so trifling, but will merit some regard from all Christians, to the honour of God and of true religion.

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This Summary explanation here laid down in so plain a manner, I hope, is sufficient to satisfy all Christians concerning the words of our blessed Lord, and the nature of being born of Water, and of the Spirit; and may serve to confute those who talk so much of the secret, spiritual, imperceptible, and insensible operations of the Holy Ghost in Regeneration, and of the same Holy Spirit, in the work of Grace; though not irresistibly, as they always affirm, of such operations. But believe me, 'tis beyond any one's comprehension, to understand how they can prove insensible, imperceptible operations, to be resistible, or indeed to be any operations at all. If this will not remove the prejudices of men, and inform them better than they know of the matter, let them still follow unscriptural conclusions, and their own palpable nonsense, as much as they please, for my part; though, by these plain means, I have endeavoured to inform them, and the world, better in these matters of universal concern: and I greatly desire to see a more pure and scriptural reformation in our Liturgy, as well as in our Theology. It must be acknowledged, the attempt appears too great for one alone, to stop the current tide of those

those many enthusiastic notions, which for many centuries have infected the eastern and western Churches, and have been preached up as the universal doctrines of the Gospel; all which corruptions of Christian knowledge, I verily believe, were the real effects of an ignorant enthusiastic zeal; of illiterate, vulgar interpretations of Scripture; and of mistaken notions concerning the Holy Spirit, very discernible in most authors.

The same false zeal for the propagation of such like erroneous tenets, we see, in our own times, is furiously carried on by our present Methodists, frequently the most illiterate, certainly the fittest for the purpose; and by the same peculiar methods too.

To detect and defeat these vain pretensions of Enthusiasts, is a work every way worthy of our most serious regard, and will prove of the utmost service to religion in general. With this view, notwithstanding all opposition, and many great disadvantages, with several discouragements, which I have undauntedly encounter'd, I have sincerely endeavoured to retrieve the Church of Christ, from the rust and obscurity of former, as well as the present times, and to restore Evangelical Knowledge to its original and Apostolical

Purity.

Purity. And indeed, without beginning to reform at our own Church, we must never expect to see that peace and uniformity, so much desired in the world; nor the Christian religion to be free from dissensions and troubles, till the time may come, when the present inconsistent principles shall be entirely banished from the minds of Christians, and there is all due deference paid to the Word of God, truly interpreted, and taught, which it most justly and universally deserves.

And that mankind may not so easily be deceived and misled with the common prejudices and pretensions of any church, or party of Christians whatsoever, let these two Theorems be observed; as undeniable and universal truths, intended as very necessary guards against the spirit of enthusiasm, and useful at all times.

The first Theorem, That the Apostles were undoubtedly guided by the Holy Ghost, but since their time, and now, God doth guide his Church no otherwise than by means of his Holy Word, and not by his Spirit.

The second Theorem is this, That Christ doth govern his Church by his vice-gerents, the Bishops and Ministers, truly constituted and appointed,

pointed, by virtue of his divine authority and commission, which he gave to the Apostles and their successors, to rule and instruct all Christians. In this sense it is, that Christ declareth of himself, "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen."

Such wild, extravagant, and false notions concerning the Holy Ghost, must necessarily give enthusiasts presumption enough to boast of the Spirit. See Dr. Snape's Sermons, Vol. II. Page 296. He expresseth there the common sentiments of divines in this manner; viz, "And such is the case in the spiritual building of the Christian Church, in which the continuance of those extraordinary gifts is now no longer necessary, though of the ordinary assistance of the Spirit there is, and always will be need, as long as the world endures." And what is meant by the ordinary assistance of the Spirit, he seems to inform us under the third point to be considered. "Whatever special gifts were vouchsafed upon the descent of the Holy Spirit, were in order to the settlement of the Christian religion, but are now of no longer continuance. Whether there were prophecies, they have failed; whether there were miracles, they have ceased; whether there were tongues, they are

“ are now no otherwise to be acquired but by
 “ study and application.”---(Now observe here)—
 “ but, which is of far greater value and im-
 “ portance to us than if we were able to work
 “ all miracles, to foretell all events, to unfold
 “ all mysteries, or to speak in all languages,
 “ the saving and sanctifying gifts of that Spirit,
 “ who (as on this day) came down from hea-
 “ ven, do still remain for our comfort and sup-
 “ port, and every one of us, if we sincerely de-
 “ sire and pray for them, may be sure effectually
 “ to obtain them. He regenerates us at our
 “ Baptism, and makes us one with Christ; he
 “ purifies our hearts, and gives them a holy
 “ and religious frame; he disposes us to set
 “ about our duty, and fortifies us with vigour
 “ and chearfulness to go through with it; he
 “ directs us in our doubts, enlightens our un-
 “ derstandings, gives a happy turn to our incli-
 “ nations; he guards us from temptations, and
 “ supports us in afflictions; he adds life and
 “ warmth to our devotion, and possesses us with
 “ a joyful assurance that our prayers have found
 “ acceptance.”

Such expressions concerning the Holy Ghost,
 must necessarily give people unaccountable no-
 tions of these ordinary assistances of the Spirit;

of which (the Dr. speaks) there always will be need, as long as the world endures. These spiritual, ghostly flights, tend only to raise enthusiastic notions in the minds of Christians : but, once for all, to undeceive people, there is nothing of this true in fact. The Holy Ghost doth in no wise assist us, but by means of the Word; and not by any immediate influence whatever; which to teach or think, is Enthusiasm. Tho' tis true, the same or equivalent expressions concerning the Holy Ghost, is the general, the notorious, and common language of Divines : but none were ever so learned, of so great abilities, (that I know of,) as to prove how the Holy Ghost doth perform these ordinary assistances for us, or to shew on what grounds they ascribe these peculiar effects to the Holy Spirit; nor ever will : Tho' I apprehend, it is absolutely necessary, that Divines should have a clear knowledge and true understanding of these doctrinal points, before they should presume to persuade others, to receive such notions for undoubted verities of the Christian religion; concerning which, men can have no certain knowledge or experience in the world. Besides, if this were true in fact, it evidently overthrows all the former arguments that are made use of, for shewing the necessity of supernatural aids and assistances

ances ceasing in the Christian church : because such as are here spoke of, though stiled Ordinary effects of the Holy Spirit, are certainly greater, and more than was ever granted, to the primitive body of Christians. That the Holy Ghost, excluding ordinary means, doth actually assist us, and effect these things in us, or for us, I am bold to affirm, are erroneous and vain persuasions, contrary to Scripture ; are the real operations and effects of the spirit of enthusiasm, and not of the Holy Ghost : and therefore it is in vain for men to teach, that the Holy Ghost doth regenerate us in Baptism, &c. &c.

...and dwelling in the Christian church, because
that as we have spoke of, though in the Old
New Testament of the Holy Spirit and
greater, and more than was ever known, in
the primitive body of Christians. For the
Holy Ghost, exalting ordinary men, hath
actually still us, and raised these things, in
order, as I am bold to affirm, are necessary
and very necessary, contrary to some
and the rest of the world, and still, on the
of the Holy Spirit, and one of the Holy Ghost
and therefore it is not for men to seek
that the Holy Ghost can be received as in the



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the heathen world and all their learning, in many
 ways of religion. The same effects will naturally
 follow from unworthy and mistaken notions con-
 cerning the true God; nor may we ever expect
 to see the Christian religion flourish, till the
 many ignorant and false persuasions concerning
 the Supreme Being are entirely discredited from
 the minds of Christians, and men receive in
 the following parts.

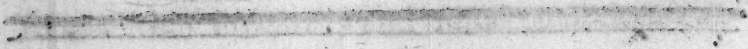
THERE are two material points in Theology I would endeavour to explain, so as to rectify some mistaken notions and absurd opinions, too prevalent with unthinking people: the first is, The Omnipresence of God; the second, about Divine Grace. The Christian system of Divinity would be wonderfully improved, were these two points rightly understood, and duly regarded. The most sublime and intricate texts of Scripture would be rendered more plain and intelligible; the many distractions and differences about the Christian religion, would be more likely to subside; and all mankind would more easily unite under the same invariable means of grace and hopes of glory. The great variety of gods, and the diversity of opinions mankind had obtained concerning them, utterly distracted the

the heathen world and all their learning, in matters of religion. The same effects will naturally follow from unworthy and mistaken notions concerning the true God; nor may we ever expect to see the Christian religion flourish, till the many ignorant and false persuasions concerning the Supreme Being, are utterly discarded from the minds of Christians, and men acquiesce in those manifestations of God, which he has been pleased to reveal concerning Himself.

THESE are two material points in Theology I would endeavour to explain, to as to rightly some mistaken notions and absurd opinions, too prevalent among the thinking people: the first is, The Omnipotence of God; the second, about Divine Grace. The Christian system of Divinity would be wonderfully improved, were these two points rightly understood, and duly regarded. The most sublime and intricate texts of Scripture would be rendered more plain and intelligible; the many distinctions and differences about the Christian religion, would be more clearly to subside; and all mankind would more fully unite under the same inviolable means of grace and hopes of glory. The great variety of gods, and the diversity of opinions mankind had obtained concerning them, nearly dissolved the

OF THE
OMNIPRESENCE of GOD,
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GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE.

OUR notions, our conceptions of God, are very weak and imperfect, when we think he is every where present; that no place or part of the universe can exclude his presence or being; but that he is in every the most private cell and retirement, as well as in churches, or heaven itself; as Jeremiah xxiii. 24. speaketh, "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." That God doth fill heaven and earth, meaneth no more, than that no parts of the universal creation can possibly exclude his intellectual presence or inspection, from beholding all things that are done in heaven and earth; as it is said, Psal. xxxiii. 13. "The Lord looked down from heaven, and beheld all the children

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of men : from the habitation of his dwelling he considereth all them that dwell on the earth." Because God is no where essentially or locally present, but in heaven, the throne of his infinite majesty ; eternally adored by the innumerable hosts of cherubims and seraphims, angels, arch-angels, and glorified spirits : there they ever enjoy the blessed intuition and fruition of his divine Being, of his all-glorious presence. "Am I a God at hand," saith the Lord, "and not a God afar off?" from whence we are plainly taught the greatness of his immense power and inspection : and the words immediately following do plainly intimate this ; "Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him?" saith the Lord." Which fully explains the nature and perfection of his intellect, his all-discerning mind ; which, by an immediate act, comprehendeth and transcendeth all things created by him. This pure act of divine power, in beholding all we say or do, makes him to be intellectually present to our understandings ; and this, as I take it, is the truest apprehension we can form to ourselves, concerning this attribute, of God's Omnipresence ; and thus he is ever present, by beholding and considering the children of men, whether we understand it or not.

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That God is, or EXISTETH, is plain and demonstrable to every one that doth but make use of his reason, to consider what is meant by Existence, or who doth think at all concerning the nature of the Supreme Being. Reason and Scripture, both conspire to assure us, that he is a pure, uncreated Spirit; a Being eternal, incomprehensible:—but that God existeth in no place, but every where, is a notion as false and full of contradictions, as can possibly be conceived. For “God is in heaven, and thou upon earth,” as Solomon expressly declareth, Eccles. v. 2.—i. e. there must be an *Ubi* for God invisible, as well as for visible and all created beings. That immense distance between his all-perfect, pure, and uncorrupt nature, and us poor, frail, imperfect creatures, should teach us to think and speak honourably, with the utmost respect and deference, concerning his divine Majesty; and therefore, I say, for God to exist every where, or to be in all places alike at one and the same time, is as absurd a paradox as any thing in nature; and it is a thing altogether as contradictory and inconsistent with Spirit as with mere matter, to be in two places at one and the same time. This may serve to confute another fond, erroneous conceit, of God’s more peculiar presence in churches, because of the angels sup-

posed to attend there, which may possibly be invisible beings to us, but may as well be supposed to be in dead men's graves as there; unless upon some extraordinary embassy from God: for they are said to be in heaven, and to be ministering spirits; ready to obey God's will; sent forth from thence to fulfil his word and commands: and if we consult Scripture in this affair, we shall find, 1 Kings, xix. 11, 12. it is said, "The word of the Lord came to Elijah, and he said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind, an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake, a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire." From hence we may be assured, that God was not in those places, where the wind, the earthquake, and the fire were; and by consequence, that he was not in more places than one at the same time. And the great apostle declares, Acts xvii. 24. "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." How much more absurd is it, to conceive he can dwell within the prison of our bodies, in the gross and corrupt hearts of men! (most astonishing!)—that is the most polluted, unbefitting

unbefitting tabernacle for the God of purity to inhabit; the most inconsistent with his divine, immaculate nature: and still more strange, that he should be dwelling separately in the hearts of all enthusiasts, at one and the same time, to direct and assist them in all their several *extempore* prayers, inconsistent harangues, and other absurd effusions. This, I may say, is that lying wonder, and full of all deceivableness, which they, as enthusiasts, magnify and glory in, with the utmost assurance, as an immediate effect of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Quakers also boast of the immediate reaching of the Holy Spirit in them, to be the basis and foundation of all religion. This is that Antichrist, which seduceth men from the true faith once delivered to the saints, to follow the fantastic delusions of their vain hearts, and causeth God to withdraw the light of his Gospel from Christians, who will in this manner stupidly give themselves over to the vain imaginations of their own minds: and thus, we find, they oppose the divine precepts of the Gospel, set aside Christianity, and commence downright infidels, heretics, and what not—that is contrary to God's word, and the Christian church.

Presumptuous, blasphemous wretches!—Do they know what God is? or what they would be,
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who talk so amazingly of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ;—of God dwelling in their hearts ;—of most intimate and frequent communications with him ;—of his mighty power inwardly working with them ;—and of Christ being in them in very deed ?—as if the Three Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity, were no where but in their breasts, and in the mighty pretended operations upon their souls. This, and a great deal more, is supported and preached up, with the greatest bluster and noise imaginable, and every one is threatened with the thunder of damnation, who doth not believe them. Blessed Lord ! most strange !—that men speaking as the ministers of Christ, and by his Spirit, should damn all mankind for not believing a lie—I mean, the inward teaching of the Spirit, from whence men may derive as many lies as their fancies can devise. Innumerable instances of this kind may be frequently observed : as one enthusiast told in my hearing, “ He felt God’s bodily presence in him,” and said to a person on his death-bed, who had turned from the Church to be an Anabaptist, “ he plainly saw the Anabaptist was saved as well as himself too.” The dying person in conversation was not much behind him, and said, “ He felt God’s presence with him, but much more at some times than at others.” ’Tis horrid
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and wild talk, that the supreme, incomprehensible Being should have a bodily presence, or that his presence can be felt, by impure and frail mortals here on earth; when we read that the presence of God with Moses, was so astonishing, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance. See Exodus ch. xxxiv, &c. From this frenzy of enthusiasm proceedeth that spirit of Antichrist, full of all deceivableness and lying wonders; and truly the greatest and most blasphemous of all lies, I take it to be, to bely the Holy Spirit of God. To be short, such phantastic expressions are by no means reconcileable with the perfections and attributes of God, nor with the reason and experience of men; much less, are those unworthy conceptions of the Supreme Being, from whence the bigotry and flame of enthusiasm takes its rise. Let men reflect on the denunciations of God, against all false teachers or prophets, who pretend to speak in the name of the Lord, or by his Spirit, and the Lord hath not sent them; and if they had any regard to the word of God, they would be the most presumptuous sinners indeed, who dared to presume against his authority, to speak in his Name, and wilfully to reproach his Holy Spirit, when they cannot chuse but know, and be convinced, the Lord hath

hath not sent them. See ch. xxviii. of Jeremiah, &c. It is an audacious freedom men take with the divine Being, or may I say, an impious insult to the divine Majesty, for men to talk that they can feel God's presence with them, or that God is really present every where. "Evil communications corrupt good manners," saith St. Paul. It is plain, such impious thoughts concerning God's Omnipresence, and blasphemous opinions, of the inward operations of God's Holy Spirit on the souls of men, being preached up as the most saving truths and principles of the Gospel, are much more likely to make men turn apostates, than become good Christians; and we see, by common experience, that it is so in fact: because enthusiasts cast off their obedience and regard to God and man, apostatizing from the truth of God's word, reproaching his Holy Spirit, scandalizing the Christian Church, and foaming out their rage against the pastors and ministers of God, regularly commissioned by the orders of the Church, and seducing others from their lawful guides; like those false teachers foretold by St. Peter, 2 Ep. ch. ii. &c. "Who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness (after the corruption of their own hearts) and despise government, presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."

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This is the true and perfect character, by which the Holy Spirit of God distinguisheth all enthusiasts and false teachers, from other lawful and true guides ; it is beyond the power of human wisdom to describe them more exactly, and, I may say, more to the purpose. If you see men who walk not according to the rules of the Church ; but in the lusts of their own hearts ; if they despise government ; talk presumptuously, are self-willed, and speak evil of dignities ; mark all such persons to have the real spirit of Antichrist, foretold by the Apostles ; be sure take the Apostle's advice, and avoid them.

The holy Prophet David, Psalm cxxxix. describeth God's Omniscience and Omnipresence in the most plain and beautiful manner. " O Lord ; thou hast searched me out, and known me : thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts long before." His Omnipresence in verse 2. " Thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways." That is, not a real or local omnipresence, but his intellectual presence ; his intuition and inspection, which is so curious and transcendent as most intimately to discern all the transactions of our whole lives ; as he saith, " and spiest out all my ways." It is a very gross conceit,

to think God's Omnipresence meaneth, that he is every where present, by a real or local presence. For that, instead of a perfection, would be one of the greatest imperfections imaginable, to the Supreme Being. He would be in every church, in every house, in every corner of the universe, and where not! though invisible, imperceptible, in a manner unintelligible to us, and without any perfections and manifestations of his Deity and Glory; not by a free power, but by an absolute and fatal necessity of nature. This is making the Almighty Being, to have only a mere chimerical Omnipresence, and existence. By such an Omnipresence, God would be extended so as to fill all space; he would be with the devils in hell: a notion, as inconsistent with the reason of a wise man, as it is altogether unbecoming and unworthy to be an attribute of the great Majesty of heaven and earth. This will perfectly instruct us how to understand those expressions of the holy Psalmist, "If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell, thou art there also." (i.e.) If he ascended into the brightest and most glorious parts of the creation, God was there by a more immediate presence and display of his Majesty, as well as present by a perfect intuition, sole direction, and wise distribution of all spiritual and created Beings, in their several orders and departments, as the
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benign moderator and adorable Governor of all things, visible and invisible: or, if he went down into hell, the remotest and most obscure corners of all nature, God was there by an intellectual presence, by an entire inspection, clear knowledge, and comprehension of all things, howsoever transacted there. To this intellectual presence, and immediate inspection of God, it is, that all things are said to be naked and opened to the eyes of Him, with whom we have to do; as also, "the darkness and light to thee, are both alike." And the holy Psalmist demonstrateth this universal knowledge and inspection of God, by the most natural arguments. "For lo, there is not a word in my tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. Thou hast fashioned me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." Our very thoughts, before we can express them, are known to God. And the reason he gives for it is plain; for God, who formed these bodies, in such a beautiful and wonderful manner, with every sense and capacity, and gave such divine powers and faculties to our souls, must, without doubt, be intimately acquainted with all their motions and actions: He, by his all-perfect mind and intellect, thoroughly discerns and knows the secret springs and sources of our thoughts, words, and deeds; the utmost extent of power in all spiritual and created

agents; as the sole author and giver of all things; Thus he very justly informs us, and argues in another place, "He that made the eye, shall he not see? Or he that made the ear, shall he not hear? Or he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he punish?" (i. e.) Know how, with the utmost discernment and justice, to render unto every man according to his deeds.—Moreover, God is present to Christians in another sense, as St. Paul speaketh to the Corinthians, 1 Ep. v. "As absent in body, but present in spirit." (i. e.) In the power and intention of his mind: not that his soul or spirit was present with the Corinthians, by a trance or flight from his body; but under that expression he lets them know, he had their welfare and concern at heart, and thereupon he communicated his judgment and authority to them in an epistle, as an apostle and pastor of the Church of Christ. Having taken the case into his consideration, he acquaints them, he had judged already, as though he were present; and we do not find, but that epistolary determination, was altogether decisive, and effectual. In like manner, God's word is equally to be regarded by all Christians, as though he were present to rule, direct, and govern them. And truly, so long as Christians have the free use, and great advantage, of that invaluable treasure and infallible oracle; they have

have God as it were ever present with them, dictating the truth, and declaring the whole counsel of his will to them, as effectually, as if he were spiritually present with them, to express his will by an immediate voice and most affecting speech. And, doubtless, his word would have a better effect upon us, did we but consider ourselves as under his more immediate presence, and hearing the great truths of revelation as directly issuing from his mouth to our hearts: and when they come from his minister, they come from himself too; because God speaks by his mouth to the people. And what is more usual, than for friends to communicate their minds to each other, tho' separated in the most distant parts of the earth; and thereby to make themselves present one to the other in mind and purpose, as if they had a real interview and conversation together? It is in this manner, that men, by studying and reading God's word, hold a kind of communication with him, and converse, as it were, together: by meditating upon God, we can make our minds and intentions present to him; by praying, adoring, and devoting ourselves to him, we place ourselves before him, as the chief object of our worship. Notwithstanding, we cannot possibly make God present to us, but in thought only and consideration; though God, who comprehendeth all things

things and all events in one view, by one pure act of intuition and inspection, is ever present to all our thoughts, words, and deeds : his all-perfect mind and understanding pierces through all nature, whether we think of it, and consider his intellectual presence to be every where, or not. So we can think of other persons whom we love and value ; by an act of thought and consideration, we can make ourselves intentionally, or, may I say, in our minds, to be present with them : but we cannot make them to think on us when we please ; or make them in their minds so to be present with us, without some external means and intercourse. But with God, there is a perfect intuition, knowledge, and understanding, of all causes and effects, of all things contingent or possible, without any cause or means, but what entirely depends upon his own infinite power and knowledge, wisdom and goodness, and other perfections. To this purpose may be explained that of the prophet Isaiah, lvii. 15. " For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." First, God shews where he more peculiarly dwells ; " in the high and lofty place." Secondly, how he intellectually dwells, " with him that is of a contrite and humble

ble spirit :” that is, as we may apprehend, God is greatly pleased and delighted in his mind and intellect, to behold one that is of a pure and peaceable disposition : or, if I may be allowed thus to express it, God taketh great complacency and satisfaction in his mind, for his intellectual presence and inspection to remain with him, to behold him, and continue his regard upon him ; or, in the Scripture language, “ to dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit.”

As the mind of man is ever pleased and delighted, to continue and dwell upon the most amiable and endearing objects of contemplation ; so Almighty God, by that wonderful contemplation with which his high and holy nature is dignified, doth dwell with the just and upright man : as he considered his servant Job, he perfectly well understood and contemplated Job’s integrity under all his trials ; as God speaketh of him, “ A perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.” And as to the vulgar opinions, of God’s being present with us in any other sense, they are certainly erroneous, and ought to be discarded : because it is contrary to the nature and perfections of God, to uncorrupt reason and pure religion, to think that God doth, by his real presence or Spirit, dwell with men. And therefore it is said, Psal. cxxxviii. 6. “ For tho’ the Lord be high, yet

yet hath he respect unto the lowly: as for the proud, he beholdeth them afar off;" that is, at the greatest distance from his pure and holy nature; as utterly unworthy of his regard and favour. In like manner, the good father of a family taketh great delight, complacency, and satisfaction, to behold his children and servants pursue right ways, diligently improving themselves, and doing their several duties, in their respective stations allotted them; he appears gracious and amiable to them, and highly rewardeth them with singular marks of his favour and esteem: but as for worthless, untoward children, or sons of Belial, he cannot behold their ways without indignation and resentment; nor endure them in his presence without abhorrence and displeasure; nay, when they have deserved his anger, he justly casteth them out of his favour, and bids them be gone from his presence. The Scripture, in an abundant manner, testifieth the like of God, that he delighteth to behold the just and upright, and that he hath no pleasure in wickedness, as Psal. v. And in Psal. xi. it is said, "The Lord alloweth the righteous; but the ungodly, and him that delighteth in wickedness, doth his soul abhor." And again; "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness: his countenance will behold the thing that is just."

just." And, Prov. xv. 8, 9. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord; but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness;" and the like in many more texts may be observed. Not that I say, God hath the like passions with men: but that there may be something in him, which doth thus sympathize with these dispositions in us; this is what the Scripture plainly confirmeth, and is conspicuous enough to your observation. But in regard to God's presence with us, I apprehend those several Scripture phrases, which speak of God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost dwelling with us, in us, or in our hearts, and such like, may be well interpreted to signify no more than his intellectual presence, his inspection and contemplation remaining with us, and beholding our ways; that the Almighty, in his pure mind and intellect, by viewing and contemplating his own works of creation and providence, makes himself present with us, so as that he perfectly understandeth and considereth all our doings: But that God is actually present with us, by any real essence or local presence, is incongruous and absurd to imagine. I deny not but he can, if he pleaseth, make himself present to us, in some

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such manner as he did, when he spake to his servant Moses; but that would be in a wonderful and astonishing manner: and even so little of his presence would be enough to make us exceedingly fear and quake, as Moses did.—See St. Paul, Heb. xii. 20. Now as to the expressions of God's "speaking to us by the Spirit," and "walking by the Spirit," they mean no more than his speaking unto us by the Gospel of our blessed Lord, and walking according to the rules and precepts of the Gospel; not by the spirit of man, is plain, nor by the Spirit of God neither. For who is, at this time, or can be supposed (after the most perfect revelation by Jesus Christ,) so much honoured and dignified with the presence and Spirit of God, as to have him inwardly teaching and immediately guiding his soul? And thus have I in some measure defeated the spirit of enthusiasm: for God speaketh unto us no other ways now, than by his Word and ministers; and any one who has but half an eye, or half as many brains as a woodcock, may easily discern as much; and one who will not see it, when it is made manifestly appear to him, must be obstinately blind indeed.

Thus far have I very briefly considered our conceptions and apprehensions concerning the nature

nature of God's Omnipresence; and that altogether in so plain a manner, that I need not say any more on that head, but proceed, 2dly, to treat about the Grace of God.

II.

DIVINE GRACE.

T may be needful to say much in this part of my design, concerning Divine Grace: as the following treatise plainly sheweth the manner of God's distinguishing and affording men all necessary motives and saving knowledge, to lead them into the way of truth; and in the end, to bring them to eternal life, by natural and the ordinary means of Grace; so that as he revealing his will to mankind, primarily by his holy prophets, and lastly, by his Son Jesus Christ, and the blessed apostles. Now because there are so many strange, inconsistent notions foisted upon the world concerning Divine Grace, that very few truly understand what it meaneth, there appears some necessity to explain it.

II.

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D I V I N E G R A C E .

IT may be needless to say much in this part of my design, concerning Divine Grace ; as the following treatise plainly sheweth the manner of God's dispensing and affording men all necessary motives and saving knowledge, to lead them into the way of truth ; and in the end, to bring them to eternal life, by natural and the ordinary means of Grace ;—that is, by revealing his will to mankind, primarily, by his holy prophets ; and lastly, by his Son Jesus Christ, and the blessed apostles. Now because there are so many strange, inconsistent notions imposed upon the world, concerning Divine Grace, that very few truly understand what it meaneth, there appears some necessity to explain it

it more particularly. For many ignorantly conceive it to be the effect of some immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, which (according to their own notions and expressions) insensibly and imperceptibly worketh upon the souls of men. Now that it cannot be the Spirit of God immediately operating on the soul, is very plain to every one who doth but duly observe and consider, that Almighty God, on the fulfilling of his will by Jesus Christ, and compleating all revelation and Scripture by the holy apostles, (as is agreed on all hands,) did recall and withdraw his Spirit from the Church; and nothing of any immediate communication by the Spirit, hath, since the Apostles times, been afforded to man, to direct them in the ways of truth, and to withhold them from sin and error; and therefore, Divine Grace cannot be the immediate assistance and work of the Spirit in our souls: and consequently, God's Grace is altogether the effect of external means, that assistance only which the word of God affords the Church; for Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ. Again, others will have it to be somewhat extraordinary, which they cannot well account for to themselves, or to any one else; it may be a private whisper, a suggestion of some good purposes, or a conviction of sin, or a mixture of these, attended with strange terrors and

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perturbations of mind, almost to desperation; or
 it may be a presumptuous assurance of salvation,
 with other pretended extraordinary gifts and ope-
 rations of the Holy Spirit, under a vain deluded
 confidence, that they have received the Spirit.
 But to any considerate person, this will appear a
 very wild and impious conceit, and void of truth;
 for the Holy Spirit was never promised to any
 but the Apostles of Christ, and was given to them
 only, in a wonderful and extraordinary manner.
 And after our Blessed Saviour's resurrection, when
 all power was given to him in heaven and earth,
 he commanded them, saying, (Luke xxiv. 49.)
 " And behold, I send the promise of my Father,
 upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem,
 until ye be endued with power from on high."
 And that no other men were ever endued with
 the same power and Spirit, is certain, from the
 promise, the particular place and manner, in
 which the holy Apostles received the Spirit; and
 it is a fact to be well known, that the Almighty
 God hath thought fit to recall his Holy Spirit to-
 gether with the blessed apostles, from the Church;
 and that for so many ages, even since their times,
 it hath never been known, that God did operate
 by his Holy Spirit in the souls of men, by in-
 wardly teaching them, and leading them into all
 truth. Nor is it possible for us now to know,

whether

whether the Spirit did inwardly teach the Apostles, and so lead them into all truth, or by what other means. But that the Spirit did certainly assist them in some miraculous and extraordinary manner, we are assured from the Divine Power which the Spirit gave them to confirm the truth of their mission, by demonstration and power, doing the works which no other persons, by the ordinary course of nature, could ever do. Besides, if God should confer the Holy Spirit in such a manner, on some few particular christians only, to effect their salvation, and that all mankind, who received not the Spirit to assist them, should perish eternally; God would appear utterly inconsistent with himself, and contrary to all his most gracious declarations in scripture, that he is no respecter of persons—not willing that any should perish—who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, they who take the Grace of God to be an inward principle, a secret aid or assistance of the Holy Spirit of God, wrought immediately by him in the soul, are egregiously mistaken concerning the nature of Divine Grace; they conceive it to be, what it really is not; and are as ignorant of the truth, as they are of the inhabitants in the moon.

For Grace properly defined, and rightly understood,

flood, is the Divine Assistance; namely, the
 knowledge of God, and the motives to our duty,
 revealed by his Son Jesus Christ, by the holy A-
 postles and Prophets; this properly and truly is
 the Grace of God, which bringeth salvation, and
 hath appeared to all men; as St. Paul attesteth to
 Titus, "Teaching us, that denying ungodliness
 and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righte-
 ously, and godly in this present world." Titus ii,
 12. Which Grace is manifest and well known to
 all Christians. But as for any other Grace of God,
 we are certain no such inward Grace hath appear-
 ed unto all men, whatever some few particular
 persons may pretend; and we know, we are as-
 sured from scripture, that Grace and Truth came
 by Jesus Christ, for the general advantage and in-
 struction of the universal Church of God. But as
 for that inward teaching or Grace, which enthusi-
 asts dream of, we may be assured it cannot be the
 Grace of God: because it is not manifest to the
 world, it is known to no Christians, it is no where
 promised, or dispensed to all Christians; and
 serves only to some private views, and the inte-
 rests of seducing spirits; not for the edification
 of the Church, but manifestly tendeth (as it ever
 hath done, and ever will) to the subversion of the
 Christian Faith and Ministry; to render the word
 of God an insignificant dead letter, not to be inter-
 preted,

pretered, nor able to communicate Grace to any one
 Christian, without the immediate aids of the Spi-
 rit: from whence it plainly appears, that such an
 inward teaching of the Spirit, entirely frustrates
 the Truth and Grace of Christ, which he hath
 brought to light through the Gospel. Supposing
 this doctrine true, that there was an inward teach-
 ing of the Holy Spirit, whereby the soul was di-
 rected and governed; such an operation would
 absolutely supersede and set aside all natural and
 ordinary means of Grace; all other teaching
 whatsoever must give way to the Spirit: where-
 fore, if duly considered, it will appear a fond notion,
 which hath been too long imposed upon the world;
 and which, by a deluded fancy, or wild imagina-
 tion, hath been too much relied on and received
 as true; but is undoubtedly, a vain and false con-
 ceit, a strange delusion. And this every confide-
 rate reader may easily discover, from the writings
 of learned divines; for I shall name no authors;
 which, as some say, Grace may possibly be derived
 from the inward suggestions of the Holy Spirit:
 But pray, what suggestions can they mean? must it
 be by visions, or dreams, or by some other more
 extraordinary method, which I am certain would
 be most wonderful, such as enthusiasts have in-
 vented, of an inward call, which the Holy Spirit
 giveth them, exclusive of all ordinary means; and

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I do not follow. For the Spirit may operate alone
 the use of their ordinary means, and render them
 effectual for the conversion of sinners, & for the edification
 of the church. — K.

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without any possibility of ever making out the truth of any such operation, either to themselves or others. Besides, it is contrary to revelation, 'tis more than we can find the Apostles had; for we are certain they had an outward call by Christ himself, with proper power and authority given to them by our Blessed Saviour, to satisfy mankind, and demonstrate the truth and certainty of their divine mission. Nor must we be so far deluded, as to believe such a call, till men can give the world equal demonstration and satisfaction in this important point. Others again, you will find, with more than ordinary confidence affirm, that the holy Spirit worketh insensibly, and imperceptibly upon the soul; Expressions which notoriously betray the weakness of judgment, and want of consideration in men; nor can we possibly reconcile such notions with scripture, reason, or experience. For where doth scripture inform us, of any such inward working, or teaching of the Holy Spirit? On the contrary, it assures us, that Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God: and without Faith it is impossible to please God. "For whatsoever is not of Faith is sin." Our Faith then, and all our works, must be grounded on the sure word of God, as the basis and foundation of all Grace, of all Faith and saving knowledge; and not on any inward operation of the Spirit.

Spirit. In the next place, let any man's reason shew him how it is possible, for one soul or spirit, to work upon another embodied spirit, as our spirits are, without the mediation of the senses. On the other hand, I presume, it is demonstrable, that our souls receive all the knowledge we have, from the ideas of sensation and reflection; that all divine truths, are conveyed to our minds by the same natural ordinary means; and not by any inward operations of the Spirit. Or lastly, I desire to know, how any one can possibly experience that in himself, which is imperceptible to him, which he is insensible of? This indeed must be an acute kind of knowledge, a revelation very extraordinary and comprehensive. In short, if any one will allow the arguments, that are brought for proof of the inward call, or working of the Spirit, he may believe any thing, by the same persuasion, of his having the spirit; be it never so absurd, or contradictory to his reason and senses.

There is certainly as great cause to remove these erroneous and dangerous opinions, in this extravagant and wild age of enthusiasts; when it is maintained and preached with so much assurance, that there can be no religion, nor possibility of salvation, without the inward aids and

teaching of the Spirit. Nor will this vulgar madness of the people be pacified, till the spirit of enthusiasm is defeated in a rational way, and their minds are becalmed by reason and consideration. And this, as I apprehend, is the greatest testimony I can give of my earnest and sincere regard for the welfare and increase of sound doctrine, and true religion; to promote which, I humbly offer these my sentiments to the public; to let men see and know, upon what groundless and erroneous principles, they break the peace of Religion, and disturb the tranquility of the Church; and how little reason there is, to support fanaticism and enthusiasm. And therefore, let all Christians be very cautious and careful, in these dangerous days; let them seriously debate in their own breasts, how dreadful and deplorable their case must be, who are from the Faith once delivered to the Saints; and how much worse it must be with them, that corrupt the faith and doctrines of the Gospel. Let them duly consider the truth and reason of these religious and important affairs; let them thoroughly search every doctrine; let them carefully examine the tenets and principles of men, be they never so much applauded and commended by their followers, ere they give up themselves to be guided and led by them: or, as the Apostle speaks,

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"Let them try the spirits, whether they are of God," before they quarrel and rail against the established ministers and doctrines of the Church. And there is great reason for this caution, not only on account of the great mischief, which is done by enthusiasts, to true religion in general, but also, of the sin and guilt that is incurred thereby, to their own souls in particular.

Now it is too notorious to be insisted on, tho' it ought to be considered, how far error doth prevail over mankind, through want of due consideration and severe examination; especially, when headed by busy persons, of a gloomy disposition, and of unsteady principles. Prejudice and fondness of innovation, sets men adrift before every blast of doctrine; who seldom return to a sound mind, especially when encouraged therein by multitudes of followers. Thus it is with our present Methodists, and ever hath been the case of enthusiasts, who corrupt the doctrines and faith of the Gospel, by their inward teachings; and place greater confidence in their own traditions, than the written word: as our Blessed Lord tells the Pharisees, Mark vii. 13, "making the word of God of none effect, thro' your tradition, which ye have delivered." And notwithstanding their manifest errors, they boldly charge the word of God

God with the doctrines they teach ; as if truth, and the God of truth itself, must be supposed to countenance their wild delusions, which they add unto the prophecy of this book, mentioned in the last of the Revelations ; may not such miscreants well deserve the plagues that are written therein ? nay, do not they bely God, and the Holy Spirit, when they falsely attribute their doctrine and teaching to the operations of God's Holy Spirit, which can only be the effects of their own enthusiasm ? and if that sort of lying be the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, mentioned by our Blessed Lord, they must never expect forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come ! most amazing sentence ! Therefore, let all such duly consider, the danger and folly of enthusiasm, in promoting errors, instead of sacred and divine truths ; but more especially, in charging the Holy Spirit of God, with all their vain delusions ; the guilt whereof is so heinous, and the crime is grown so common. Let us earnestly pray to God, to put away the evil far from us.

The spirit of enthusiasm is of so long a standing, that it has ever raged in the Christian world. In the times of the Apostles, St. John speaks of it, as that spirit of Antichrist, which men of gnostick

gnostick principles did arrogantly assume, pretending, they assuredly had the real spirit of God, with the gift of inspiration ; that what they delivered was from God, as having greater degrees of spiritual light and knowledge than the blessed Apostles. " And as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now, saith he, there are many Antichrists, whereby we may know, that it is the last time," (to wit) of God's revealing his will to the world, by his Son Jesus Christ, and his Apostles. And that Christians may not be seduced by them, or misled, in time to come, he gives this plain description concerning these Antichrists, 1 Ep. ii. 18, 19. " They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest," &c. Can any thing be more clear and discernible, in relation to all Enthusiasts ? They oppose the regular ministry and ordinary methods of salvation, and form themselves into distinct parties ; as if they only taught the true precepts of religion, and were in the right way of salvation ; while the established orders and settled ministers of the Church, fall under the greatest disregard and contempt, with respect to themselves. No teachers or followers of true Gospel principles, like, or equal, to themselves.

themselves. It is true, they pretend to strange conversions, to immediate convictions, to inspirations, and inward teachings of the Holy Spirit; and, to give some countenance to these wild pretences, they would fain impose upon the world, endeavouring to appear with far greater degrees of spiritual knowledge, and spiritual gifts, of self-denials and austerities, of sanctity and holiness of life, and to talk in far higher strains of the Spirit, than ordinary: they carry a fair outside and shew of religion, having a seeming zeal for godliness; but all upon gnostic principles, and a false foundation; being puffed up with a spiritual pride, and Pharisaical righteousness, while they continue not steadfast in God's covenant, but follow their own fantastical imaginations, instead of being led by the Spirit. Tho' under the powerful delusion of Enthusiasm, they pretend to have the immediate assistance and inward direction of the Holy Spirit, which, they affirm, is the only possible means of salvation: that the word and preaching, the Gospel ministry and sacraments, all signify nothing, without this inward operation of the Holy Spirit. And so that senseless Enthusiast of Everton once told me, "The Word of God had no power or efficacy at all; nay, that it signified nothing, unless the Spirit went along with it;"

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which is as erroneous and false a notion, as the heart of vain man can conceive : because, it cannot be ; the Spirit never did go along with the Word, but in miracles, and outward demonstrations of power, which the apostles gave, for the proof of their divine mission and inspiration ; it is acknowledged, and I have already shewed, that God has recalled his Spirit from the church ; it is a fancy so contrary to the real truth and nature of God's wisdom, goodness, and power, to suppose that the Holy Spirit of God must do and effect those ends, which the Word of God only was designed and intended to effect : for it certainly must be owing to the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, thro' Jesus Christ, to send his Holy Spirit, to reach and inspire the holy pen-men of scripture, to commit the word in writing, as the infallible will of God, to direct and rule the hearts of all Christians in the future ages of the church, and to which they might have perpetual recourse for assistance, as the infallible teaching and effects of the Spirit. Besides, it is flatly denying the perfections and power of God, to assert, that his holy word cannot effect those ends he designed to carry on, thro' the revelation of his Son Jesus Christ, but that he must send his Holy Spirit at every juncture, to do what his word is abundantly sufficient

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to do ; nay, not to do the hundredth thousandth part, for the benefit of his church, as the written word doth ; but only for the salvation of some few particular persons. As the blessed apostle testifieth ; “ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ;” 2 Tim. iii. 16. nor can all their inward teaching of the Spirit do more, unless it be to render the word of God an insignificant, dead letter ; and therefore it is great impiety, if not blasphemy, thus to deny the truth and power of the Holy Ghost given to the apostles, and to charge God with such imperfection and folly.

Now I am upon this argument, give me leave to convince this spirited Enthusiast, with all his forward emissaries, that the Spirit of God did never go along with the word, but in miracles and external signs wrought by the apostles, and not by the hearers of the word ; whereby they were convinced, that the doctrine preached by the apostles, was the word and power of God, then not by the Spirit entering into their hearts to convert them ; which is an horrid persuasion, most astonishing ! and never to be credited, ’till proved by the undoubted authority and power of miracles, which you and your converts ought to give

give the world, (this is the least proof we can demand) before we can ever be persuaded, that the Holy Spirit doth certainly go along with your doctrine. With reverence be it known, your mighty boasting to me, concerning the wonderful effects of your preaching, is a plain declaration, that your teachers can preach the Spirit of God into your auditors, upon some extempore strains. Fall ! why don't you fall now ? Or at least, you may think they have received the Spirit, when people fall into frightful fits at your meetings, howling, screaming, and raging, like persons under the greatest distraction ; others under melancholy and discontent, go away, and frequently put an end to their own lives in the most miserable manner ; which I dread to mention, such is the effects of your Spirit ! But be astonished ! You remarkably observe, the Clergy (who use the best composed, the most rational, and studied discourses) preach to very little or no purpose at all, and without any effect upon their hearers, as wanting the necessary and powerful concurrence of the Spirit, to go along with the word. With great modesty and certainty I am bold to affirm, that much more good is done to the world by well-composed discourses, than by all the strains of extempore effusions whatsoever ; and long experience doth prove the fact

beyond all dispute. And further be it known, that all such concurrence of the Spirit with the word, as all persuasions of the inward motions, operations, or suggestions of the Holy Spirit upon the minds or souls of men, are notoriously erroneous and absurd, notwithstanding such notions may have embarrassed the Christian world for a long time. And I am verily persuaded, the like senseless notions have been purely owing to some few texts misunderstood and misapplied; as I find verified in most authors I have met with. See the great Dr. Jer. Taylor, a man who, for his eminency and learning in the Christian church, was admired and esteemed above most of the age; who set forth a collection of discourses upon divinity, as a plan for improving the method of preaching to a greater perfection, when ministers and people were so little acquainted with good preaching. Observe the prayer he directs to be used before sermon, in his volume of discourses; how egregiously he was mistaken about that text in St. Luke, ii. 13, "And hast promised thy Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" which words imply or mean nothing like what is intended by him, and other Divines; because God doth not give his Holy Spirit to the Christian world, to assist mankind; he was given once for all to the apostles, to lead them into all truth; and

and how the apostles did teach and lead men, is well known; not by God's communicating or giving the Holy Spirit to all men, but by their preaching and communicating the word to the world. Nor indeed can the Holy Spirit be said to assist us at all, any other way than instrumentally; by instructing, guiding, and governing the church of Christ, thro' means of the word, the ministry, and the sacraments: neither have mankind the least cause or reason to expect or desire any other assistance of the Holy Spirit, than what God, by the natural and ordinary means of grace, doth abundantly afford men in the Christian church, since the days of the blessed apostles, and since all inspiration hath entirely ceased; though many mistaken people do pretend and imagine, that God gives his Spirit to them that ask him; which Holy Spirit, by inward aids and assistances, doth direct and rule our hearts: this is what I term, direct Enthusiasm; because, we have no experience of these aids in fact, nor is there any promise, in terms or expressions, which intend or mean such an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, throughout the whole gospel. Here, then, I shall consider what St. John, 1 Epist. iv. 12. testifieth; "Hereby, (saith he) know we, that we are in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." The apostle, observe, doth not say, He

He hath given us his Spirit, but, *of his Spirit*; i. e. he hath given us the effects of his Spirit; revealed to us, by the gospel, the motives and means of knowing our duty to God, of loving and adoring him for his love and goodness to us, through Jesus Christ: and what the apostle means by the Spirit of God, may be gathered from the preceding verse, where “to love one another,” is said to be “the cause of God’s dwelling in us, by his Spirit of love;” and, God’s love is said to be perfected in us, by our loving one another. The meaning is, as St. John further explains himself, ver. 17. Such a gracious disposition of soul, is most exactly agreeable to our blessed Saviour’s new commandment, and to his divine nature; he having first loved us, and continues to love us, though there is nothing in us to deserve his love: he hath given us of his Spirit, (i. e. instrumentally, through the gospel,) of that kind and good disposition, ready always to promote the happiness of mankind, which is so gloriously conspicuous in God, and his eternal Son, our Redeemer; for there we are taught to imitate God, to be holy as he is holy, &c. The words of our apostle truly understood, are very far from proving what enthusiasts dream of: for God dwells no otherwise in us, than by virtue and resemblance of his love; we dwell in him,
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and he in us, not in a literal, but in a scriptural sense, by being like him, in imitating his divine perfections, and doing his will. And therefore the apostle declares positively, ver. 20. "That if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." When Scripture truly interpreted favoureth the cause I have undertaken, it is not the multitude of authorities, or antiquity of opinions, shall have any weight with me, for the continuation of such gross and senseless errors; because there have been enthusiasts of all religions that ever were in the world, before our blessed Saviour's coming, and so have been ever since. It is great, very great pity, that mankind should now be deluded with errors, and the vain imaginations of their own hearts, seeing they have so perfect and unerring a rule to guide and direct them, and bringing every thought into captivity, to the obedience of Christ. Moreover, that these enthusiastic notions are contrary to the very nature of the human soul, take the sense of the learned Nathanael Culverwell, in his Discourse of the Light of Nature; Chap. ix. of the Light of Reason, p. 65, 4to. where he doth make it appear, that the whole notion of an *intellectus agens*, is a mere fancy and superfluity—"Yet this may be granted to all the fore-mentioned authors, and this is the only spark of truth

truth that lies almost buried in that heap of errors, That God himself, as he does supply every being, the motion of every creature, *with an intimate and immediate concurrence*, [this to me is unintelligible, unless he means Natural Instinct thereby,] every way answerable to the measure and degree of it's entity, so he does in the same manner constantly assist the understanding with a proportionable co-operation. But then as for any such irradiations upon the soul in which that shall be merely patient; God, indeed, if he be pleased to reveal himself in a special and extraordinary manner, he may thus shine out upon it, either immediately by his own light, or else drop angelical influence upon it: but that this should be the natural and ordinary way, necessarily required to intellectual workings, is extremely prejudicial to such a noble being as the soul of man is; to which God gave such bright participations of himself, and stamp'd his image upon it, and left it to it's own workings, as much as any other created being whatsoever. Nay, as Scaliger does most confidently object it to Cardan, you will not have one argument left, by which you can evince the immortality of the soul, if ye shall resolve all the excellency of it's being and operations, into an *intellectus agens* really distinct from it." And consequently, I
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say, all internal motions and operations of the Holy Spirit, is a senseless, enthusiastic notion, to be abhorred as void of truth, contrary to the nature of a rational soul; a mere fancy and superfluity, under so perfect a rule of life and revelation, as the holy Gospel appears to be.

Therefore, at the first planting of Christianity, when the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary manner did supply the exigencies of the Church, and miraculous gifts were frequently imparted to believers, for the more immediate propagation of the Gospel, it is observable, that men were first enlightened and converted by the Word, before they were gifted. The inspired apostles, and other gifted men, who could preach the word in divers languages, or interpret those languages to the unlearned, without doubt, did make use of those means, as the direct infallible wisdom of God, to improve the understandings, and to convert the hearts, of their hearers. We know, the gift of the Spirit is the pure bounty of God, at his sole disposal, and he cannot be supposed to impart such an extraordinary and supernatural blessing, but upon the most urgent and necessary occasions; not by the instigation of human wisdom, but under the immediate direction and power of God: it is plain then, the apostles

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could not preach the Spirit into their auditors, or give the Holy Spirit to convict and convert their hearts; neither can it be imagined, that the Holy Spirit should do the office of an accuser, to convince men of sin, or cast those who received him into miserable tortures both of body and mind; yet, this enthusiasts declare to be the case of those under conviction of the Spirit. These arguments are a sufficient demonstration, that the Word preached, enlightened the understandings, and converted the hearts of unbelievers; or to what purpose should they preach to the people, or interpret what they delivered, if the Spirit only had the power to convert men to the Christian faith, and to effect their reformation? had it been so, then all the preaching and expounding in the world would have been in vain, and to no manner of purpose: and to support my argument, I have the authority of the blessed apostle St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 12. who expressly asserteth, "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." Now this is all that the blessed apostles ever pretended: they never propagated such groundless notions concerning the Spirit. The authority by which they preached, the clearness and efficacy of the doctrines which they delivered, and the miraculous signs and wonders which they performed, did

did sufficiently convince mankind, and convert them to the Christian religion, without the Spirit ever going along with the word, as enthusiasts would imagine and persuade: whereas, in fact, there was never any such thing in nature—no one ever in reality, or by any experience, received the Spirit by human means, or in such manner, as mistaken teachers do boast and pretend to receive it: the greatest, certainly, of all wonders; if their preaching and praying could benefit men with the gift of the holy Spirit!—Was there ever such a miracle? Wherefore, it can appear to be no wonder, that Christendom is so much over-run with enthusiasm, since we find there are so many false, absurd, and deceivable notions promoted in the world, with the utmost assurance and diligence, as the basis of true religion, that they would even seduce the elect, were it possible. I am ashamed to think such errors should stand in need of confutation, but that multitudes in the world are run out after them; when 'tis to be hoped, wise and considerate Christians, being confirmed in the truth of the established Church, with sound doctrine, will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and to beware of false prophets, which come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: such are all persons pretending to preach and pray by

the Spirit; teaching that Christians must receive the Holy Spirit, or else be eternally damned. Could one conceive that Christians should be so ignorant, as to believe a word from the mouths of such teachers? and yet we see how vain and trifling men are with God, religion, and their own souls. Instead of men becoming converts to such teachers, one would conclude they would fly from, and abhor such doctrine, and those who taught it, were they not seemingly fond of damnation. But here lies the snare, and the mystery of all their cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; the damnation is not to themselves and their followers, but to others. Wherefore, if upon due examination and a sound interpretation of scripture, we find there is no promise of the Spirit to go along with the word, nor any doctrine of damnation to be the undoubted consequence, and certain to befall every one upon whom the Holy Spirit doth not come and favour with his assistance, in so gracious a manner; which we ought to be very clearly assured of, by the power and word of God; otherwise we shall ever be under the greatest doubts and distrusts of our own salvation, and must look on them and their doctrine as very absurd and mischievous. For if such a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit be the only means of salvation,

vation, and if eternal damnation must be the just portion of all who receive not the Spirit, then may we bid adieu to Christ and his gospel; his redemption, mediation, and salvation, can be of no avail to Christians; but all must eternally perish in their sins who are not favoured with the presence of the Holy Spirit, or become such wild and horrid enthusiasts, as to believe them and their doctrine to be infallible. Ah! most astonishing! Consider!—this, the basis of religion?—the means of salvation?—If the religion of enthusiasts be not a delusion of Satan, and the work of Antichrist, nothing besides can deserve to be accounted so.

Again, as to their teaching no salvation but by the Holy Spirit going along with the word, I do affirm, the Holy Spirit was never such a concomitant with the word, as to enter into the hearts of men; or otherwise they never could have been converted and saved: even when the inspired apostles preached the word, that was never the business or province of the Spirit, by any internal motions or operations to change the heart: such an involuntary, preternatural metamorphosis would be contrary to reason, and the nature of things, would be entirely inconsistent with the understanding and will of man,

man, as well as incongruous with the wisdom and power of Almighty God. For, can we suppose he could contrive no better, could not open our understandings and move our hearts, could do nothing by his word, without an immediate act of his Holy Spirit? It is strange, the word of God should not be able to do that, which we know the words and works of frail men can readily do, and which do powerfully move our wills and passions; that infallible word of truth, which is of the utmost authority and importance with all wise and good men, and which will ever have that influence upon their lives and actions, according to the just esteem and reverence they have for it; they must certainly be weak or wicked men, who think otherwise.

Besides, we never read in the scriptures, of the inward aids and assistances of the Spirit, of it's inward convictions and conversions of the heart, nothing of that nature to beget faith and repentance; but the direct contrary. We read, that the Spirit and power of God did attend the inspired preachers of the gospel in external acts and deeds, preternatural, and above the ordinary powers of nature, and not by internal motions of the Spirit upon the hearts of men;

men ; as the gospel doth abundantly demonstrate. Observe Mark xvi. 17, &c. “ And these signs shall follow them that believe ; in my Name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” Here is no Spirit mentioned to be given, nor any inward motions of the Spirit intended, to work upon the hearts of believers in general ; but manifest and external signs shall attend those that believe and are baptized, shall be wrought on them by virtue of that divine power communicated to the apostles by the Holy Spirit : for it is very plain, these words of the evangelist respect only those persons, who were ordained and constituted to teach others ; and not every one who believed the word preached, to have the divine power of giving those signs, or doing miracles in the name of Christ.

It is certain also, that extraordinary gifts continued in the church, *pro tempore*, with inspired persons; and that after the blessed apostles had propagated the Christian faith, by preaching and delivering the word in writing, after they had finished their course, we may believe such signs had an end: for we can never be assured that miracles were necessary any longer; and when inspiration ceased, immediately God withdrew his Spirit from the church; the ordinary assistance and ministry of the word, by the wisdom and providence of God, being abundantly sufficient, to continue the Christian church militant here on earth, through all ages, according to it's present divine settlement, till the consummation of all things, when the church shall reign with Christ triumphant, in his eternal kingdom of glory.

And as inspiration ceased, so ought extraordinary signs and wonders to drop of course; the main design of miracles being to demonstrate and prove the persons who had the power of working them, to be commissioned and sent of God, inspired to speak to the world in his name, and by his authority, on some great and extraordinary embassy; as the holy prophets

phets and the blessed apostles; who were endued with a supernatural and divine power, to confirm the truth of their mission, and to convince mankind, in the most sensible manner, by apparent external actions, publickly doing without ostentation, the works which no other men could do. This, it must be allowed, was the most natural, easy, and affecting method, whereby Almighty God was pleased to raise the attention of sensible, rational creatures, without overpowering their ordinary capacities; and thereby to gain a firm belief, conviction, and credit, to their authority. This was giving the most sensible, clear, and undeniable evidence imaginable, to the minds of men, that what they said and did was the divine word and power of God. This was a method altogether befitting human nature, and most worthy the adorable wisdom and power of the Supreme Being, who can never be supposed to act with a design to deceive our senses, or to impose upon our understandings.

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Wherefore, Almighty God was graciously pleased to give the utmost assurance and demonstration to the world, by mighty signs and wonders attesting the truth of his word, which, rightly believed, can never deceive us: but it is the most absurd, irrational, and horrid imposture,

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to believe or teach, that God now giveth the Holy Spirit of all truth, joy, peace, goodness, and purity, into our hearts, to which nothing that is impure, unholy, false, and detestable in the sight of God, can ever approach; nor can it ever be supposed, the same holy and immaculate Spirit would vouchsafe to hold an inward friendship and communion with our corrupt, wicked, and deceitful hearts: and notwithstanding, men do vainly assign this good Spirit a place to be in their hearts, which are still so corrupt and wicked, unholy, false, deceivable, and deceiving, is the greatest contradiction to our reason, to the immaculate nature and purity of God. And besides, for the truth of such an extraordinary belief, there is not the least foundation, promise, evidence, or experience, in the world, which argues the most consummate ignorance or depravity in human minds, to give it any credit.

As I am now treating with a person on a new footing, I must observe again, that the word *Spirit*, in many Scripture texts, is used rhetorically by a Synecdoche, where the cause is put for the effect; as the promise of the Spirit, Luke xi. 13. where *Spirit* signifieth no more than the effects of the Spirit, the common and ordinary

means of grace in the church, which are to continue with all Christians; a very little reading or understanding will discover, that the sacred writer is not to be taken in a plain and literal sense, for the real, essential, and eternal Spirit of God, no more than it should be interpreted to signify a wild goose.

Hence it is evident, how unlucky and dangerous a thing it is, for ignorant, unlearned persons, to pretend an authority to expound scripture, and to establish their wild, enthusiastic, and damnable doctrines, upon such erroneous and vulgar interpretations, though they presume never so much to an inward teaching of the Spirit, and decry all human means; when both these presumptions are most incongruous, groundless, and false. And I may take upon me to demonstrate, that all such doctrines as men do build upon the immediate inward teaching of the Spirit, but are not grounded upon the word of God, to be equally false and pernicious.

Wherefore, on mature deliberation, it is the most idle and senseless imagination, to think that Christians do now preach or pray by the immediate assistance or inspiration of the Holy Spirit; or that others receive the Spirit of God, by virtue

of their effusions, by preaching the word, or by praying: though it is a current belief and doctrine with enthusiasts, that their exercises are the immediate effects and operations of the Holy Spirit; and, to gain some credit from their followers, they roundly assert, that every one must receive the Spirit of God before they die, or they will certainly be damned. Strange notions! equally dangerous and false, as they are both wicked and blasphemous! for it is but the reverse of the Scribes and Pharisees, who ascribed the miracles of Christ to Beelzebub, the prince of the devils: and yet this is of a much more diabolical and hellish nature in its immediate consequences, ascribing their own most false and wicked doctrines to the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit; presumptuously charging the Holy Ghost as the direct author of their blasphemous imaginations and impious guilt: but they give us no sufficient proof; for it is certain, the God of all truth can never set his seal to a notorious falsehood; and we know they have no grounds from Scripture, reason, or experience, to confirm the truth of their doctrines.

Wherefore, the more effectually to deceive the hearts of the simple, and to impose upon weak and credulous minds, it hath ever been the
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method of enthusiasts, in all ages, to pretend an immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, which, if true and of undoubted experience, would be regarded far beyond all miracles, and scripture, and reason, to need any evidence of its verity; and, because it is absolutely false, no one pretends to work a miracle in the name of God, to prove it either true or reasonable.

Moreover, as to the other very vain and false assertion, That the word of God hath no power to effect any good, unless the Spirit of God doth go along with the word, as an immediate teacher; doth undoubtedly serve to confute itself, as being contrary to the whole design and tenor of the sacred writings, to common reason and experience: for if an universal and extraordinary commission was necessary (to be effected by the immediate teaching of the Spirit) for every christian, then, why not for every individual person living, seeing the whole human race are the objects of divine love? Christ died for all, his salvation is freely tendered to all mankind, and his gospel was commanded to be preached to every creature; and because preaching of the word was the ordinary means or instrument God made use of for converting the world, therefore he was pleased to grant, that at the first propagation

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of the gospel; a divine and extraordinary power should attend those who were inspired to teach the world; to work miracles and wonders, such external acts of power, as should convince the minds of those who heard the word, and in a wonderful manner saw it confirmed with signs following, transacted by the apostles in the most effectual and sensible manner; their conversion being brought to pass by hearing the doctrine, and seeing it attested by more than human power, *and not by an immediate inward teaching of the Spirit*; the word of God being naturally contrived, suited, and adapted, by the wisdom and power of God, in all its motives, promises, precepts, and threatenings, to inform the understanding, to direct the judgment, and to influence the will, in the practice of virtue and godliness. This we all know by experience and reason; we are infallibly assured of this truth by the inspired writers. "Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men," saith St. Paul; and again to the Romans, ix. 6. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." There are so many passages to confirm the power and effect of the word, that I need not recite them to a Christian who is conversant in the Bible; but must look upon any one who denies it, to be a mere infidel, or worse; one who wilfully opposeth

poseth the power, the wisdom, and truth of God.

Hence it is very plain and undeniable, that the word, preached by the apostles, did convert the hearts of unbelievers, and not the Spirit; as Acts iv. 4. doth testify; "Howbeit, many of them which heard the word, believed, and the number of the men was above five thousand." And besides, we may suppose the signs and wonders which the apostles were impowered to do, did mightily confirm the word in the hearts of believers. Now, if the Spirit did effect their conversion, and confirm their faith, all other signs and miracles would have been useless, and to no purpose, unless it were to make themselves be esteemed of the people, as so many conjurers, and to have a familiar dealing with the devil; as some were bold enough to say of the blessed Jesus, "He casteth out devils, through Beelzebub the chief of the devils;" or as others said, "Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" Moreover, to what purpose would the word serve, or preaching it? To none at all. Certainly that labour and method of treating with men would have been needless, where the Holy Spirit did more immediately and actually convict and convert their hearts.

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And besides, the suppositions will appear equally absurd and senseless, to imagine the Holy Spirit of God could not have such power of itself to effect the conversion of the heart, without the aid of so weak an instrument as the word; in short, the Spirit of God must be supposed, in this case, to be so inactive, inconsiderable, and impotent, in its own nature, as not to be in a possible capacity to act, but by the joint concurrence of the word; or, on the other hand, that the word of God hath no power to act or effect any good to the soul, without the immediate teaching of the Spirit; both, either separately or jointly considered, contradict the wisdom and power of God, and appear equally incongruous with reason and grace. To what purpose serveth the word? The enthusiast will say, To none, without the Spirit. Then, I say, to no manner of purpose with it: for the word loseth all its natural power and efficacy on us, like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, which do neither instruct our minds, nor reform our manners; when the Holy Spirit only is moved to do every thing in us, by its immediate teaching. Why truly, preaching, hearing, and ministering the word, are all the most senseless, absurd, and insignificant actions imaginable: and I wonder the

the Methodists should ever make use of these in any case; but sit, as the Quakers, 'till the Spirit moves them: their teaching of conversion by the Holy Spirit, if true, must necessarily be more efficacious and powerful on the heart, than the word, with all the possible means of grace, and all the miracles in the world to boot. Verily, it would be the greatest of all miracles, greater than the raising of Lazarus from the dead; because that was only restoring natural life to a man, but this is giving a new and spiritual life in the most miraculous manner, without the appointed and ordinary means of God's grace, and without the concurrence of our own abilities and faculties, which are necessary to inform our understanding and will, to judge and determine deliberately, to chuse and act freely, according to the rational powers peculiar to free agents: for if men act not by their reason and senses, but are acted upon by a superior power, they can no longer be free, in chusing and acting of themselves; because, it is granted, they act in this case by the will and determination of another, suppose it may be by the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit. These wild delusions and errors have always been the cause of great distractions in the world, and of great disservice to true religion.

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And above all, let it be regarded, that Enthusiasm hath been more detrimental to the Christian church, than all its persecutions, while the blood of martyrs became the seed of the church. And though her enemies have abated of their fury, yet the fire of Enthusiasm still rages more or less, according to the malignant dispositions and heated imaginations of furious zealots in every age, threatening destruction to the gospel ministry, and to the Christian faith; as indeed it has entirely subverted the once flourishing churches of Asia and Africa. For while men became wise above what is written, they have introduced the worst of heresies, which, through the pretence of inspiration, and being teachers sent of God, such men have introduced Mahometanism, and set up other false religions, as inconsistent with revelation as Paganism itself.

Thus enthusiasts, under a vile pretence of being endued with the Spirit, and of having greater light and more spiritual knowledge than other men could acquire from the written word, have laid waste great part of the Christian world: so it is, men of art and cunning have made such great advantages of these pretended inward aids of the Spirit, as to gain the affections of undiscerning

discerning people, and to draw multitudes of followers after them, depriving the regular ministers of great part of their flocks, who taught only the known truths of the gospel.

Thus Enthusiasm hath been promoted and received, to the great prejudice of Christianity; and it is not to be wondered at, that these dregs of time should be so intoxicated, infected, and corrupted with enthusiastic principles, since it appears this spirit of delusion hath so long prevailed in the world, its abettors have been supported with such variety and numbers of followers, that we can scarce meet with any ancient or modern authors, who are not somewhat tainted with their principles. It would look invidious in me to fix upon an adverse party: and therefore, if I may be allowed to give my opinion freely, void of prejudice or affection towards any church or denomination of Christians, I must say, the spirit of enthusiasm breathes too much in many of our prayers, and in the writings of Christian divines: give me leave to lay one plain specimen for all before you, in a very formal prayer, 19th Sunday after Trinity, the Collect—"O God, " forasmuch as without thee we are not able to " please thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy " Spirit may in all things direct and rule our

“ hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The former part of this prayer seems to be an hearty confession, which, in some sense, may be true ; because in God we live, and move, and have our being ; and without that life and being continued to us, by the providence of God, we are able to do nothing. Again, without the knowledge of God’s will, we can never be supposed able to do that, which we know not how, or in what manner to do, to please him. But the composition of this prayer is of a very different nature ; it is not, it cannot be intended in either of these senses : and as to the corruption of our nature since the fall, I need say nothing ; since the Holy Spirit of God so highly commendeth the faith and good works of men in holy Scripture, whose examples are there recorded, not to shew us the inability or impractability of our pleasing and serving God, but directly the contrary ; to let us know, it is not impossible for us (tho’ frail creatures) to please God ; they are motives and inducements placed before our eyes, as worthy our strictest imitation.

Therefore, to imagine that Christians cannot please God, is a notion so absurd, so contrary to the design of the Christian religion in general, and to the doctrine of the same Apostle to his

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Thessalonians in particular, to whom he writeth in the most endearing and pathetic manner, earnestly requesting them, by a solemn kind of adjuration, in these words; 1 Thess. iv. 1. "Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how you ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." Can words be more expressive and plain? here, not only the possibility how to walk and to please God is directly asserted, but the assured means are plainly declared, how it must be done, and to abound more and more therein. Hence it is observable, that the great errors and corruptions which enthusiasts have brought into the Christian world, have so far confuted the principles, and perverted the doctrines, of the gospel, that very few Christians have true and proper notions of Divine Grace, or do rightly understand the Scripture sense and meaning of the holy apostles concerning it; especially in these corrupt, degenerate times, when men are tossed about with every blast of vain doctrine, and the Holy Spirit is blasphemously attainted, as the immediate source and author of their impious delusions, to the utter shame and confusion of all such zealots, who undermine the authority and the written word of God, by their vile pretences to the Spirit;

Spirit; and of all other Christians who run into the like extravagant notions and errors of enthusiasts.

From this universal foul stream of corruption, most of the senseless and absurd opinions too flagrant in the Christian world, do principally derive their birth and increase; and mankind, especially those who ought to teach others, above all things have most need to guard against the principles of enthusiasm, which are so deeply rooted in every system and profession of Christians. Hence too, the many strange opinions concerning Grace, and the great ignorance about it; inasmuch that the most diligent enquirers into the affair can no where meet with any true and settled notions of Grace, without an immediate recourse to the sacred authors, which, too, have been so much strained and corrupted with illiterate and vulgar meanings, that Grace, for the most part, is generally esteemed to be an immediate aid, impulse, motion, or suggestion of the Holy Spirit, inwardly effected and impressed on the soul; by which assistance, all the natural, external, and ordinary means of grace, as well as our own proper abilities and rational endeavours to co-operate with the motives and design of God's holy word, are eternally excluded,

ed, and out of the question : if it is an inward gift of God, then it is in no person's power to acquire it, or impart it to others; which, well observed, is a notion so inconsistent with reason, and so repugnant to Scripture, that among all the sacred pages, we never find the blessed apostles either speaking or writing to Christians, when the aids and gifts of the Holy Spirit were evident and frequent : nevertheless, they speak not after the wild strains and rant of enthusiasts, namely, "As ye have received the inward aids and assistance of the Holy Spirit, how to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more;" but on the contrary, the apostles plainly refer them to the only true and proper means of grace, to that free mercy and universal assistance, which Almighty God afforded all mankind, through Jesus Christ and the inspired apostles, viz. "As ye have received of us (the word and gospel of Christ instructing you) how to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." Which Scripture is so plain, the express meaning and sense whereof is so clear, intelligible, and indisputable, that it abundantly confirmeth the truth I am contending for, That Grace is not the immediate aid or assistance of the Holy Spirit, which, for so many ages, hath never appeared to have been communicated to
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any Christian, and is not now to be expected : and consequently, all that we can understand or mean by Grace, is but merely the effect, the aid, and assistance of God's holy word.

It is undoubtedly a very great abuse of Scripture and reason, to preach up any other Grace, or to puzzle men with so many scholastic and various kinds of Grace ; sometimes calling it special Grace ; otherwhiles, preventing, restraining, or sanctifying Grace, as divines please ; when all that can be said, the utmost of their meaning, cometh but to one and the same thing, viz. That Grace is the divine assistance communicated to men by means of God's holy word ; as it is certain, all our knowledge and improvement in the ways of godliness and true religion, do most evidently appear to be the natural result and effect of the holy Scriptures, truly believed and duly practised.

Nor hath God promised any other grace or assistance than what he hath already afforded the world, by the ministry of his holy word and sacraments, which, with our own endeavours to reap the advantageous and blessed fruits thereof, are abundantly sufficient and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

in righteousness, the only means to direct, reform, and enlighten men, in all things necessary to their salvation,

And I am verily persuaded, the many senseless, enthusiastic notions about the Spirit, and men's notorious ignorance concerning Divine Grace, have been the real cause of the greatest mischiefs, distractions, and troubles, to the Christian religion, throughout the several ages of the world; and are too, too visible in these evil times of dissention and enthusiasm.

What doth give greater countenance and encouragement to this spirit of enthusiasm, than such ignorant addresses in our prayers to God, "Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts?" as if God's Holy Spirit was always to be in us, to rule and direct us, and no other assistance could avail and help us. Now, what renders the absurdity most glaring, is, that this prayer is directed to be made by the mouth of the minister, for a congregation of Christians, assembled in the presence of Almighty God; whose reason and understandings are assisted, directed, and improved, by the glorious light of the gospel. Such a preliminary article in their behalf, is the

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highest impeachment of the justice, wisdom, and goodness of God, in creating man to serve him, and not giving him the least ability to please his Creator. This is directly flying in the face of God, and telling him, he hath not created us good, in our kind; that the gifts of our reason and understanding, and all our bodily senses, are of no avail, and to no purpose in serving him: it is also the greatest disparagement to revelation in general, and to the gospel of our blessed Lord in particular: it is basely disowning his great love and goodness, in making known to us the will of God, in those great and wonderful methods of our salvation: it is declaring, all the divine precepts and motives in the gospel, all God's promises and threatenings, all the examples and instructions of men, are of no use to us, are merely in vain, and to no purpose: in short, it is subverting the order, the whole œconomy of nature and grace; no good to be done, no assistance to be had, till this miraculous power of Enthusiasm doth conjure up the Holy Spirit of God, to work all in us, and to do all for us, and not we! "Mercifully grant, "that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct "and rule our hearts"—Good Lord! This, I say, is more than ever was granted to any apostle, to any man living; if I may be allowed to except the

the Son of God, God and Man. That the Holy Spirit of God should in all things direct and rule our hearts, this certainly would set aside all the natural powers and abilities of our souls and bodies; our reason, understanding, and willing, would be of no use to us; in short, we could have no such powers of our own, nor even the natural and common affections of our bodies, which are all indispensably necessary for us, in this state of trial and probation. Besides, Christians would be what men are not now, nor are capable of being here, that is, in a state of perfection and happiness, not capable of sinning, or suffering for it.

Moreover, if Christians of all men were not able to serve and please God, why did our blessed Lord teach us, when we pray, to say, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven?" Sure, the wisdom of our blessed Saviour would never direct us to pray to his heavenly Father, that we may do any thing which we are naturally not able to do, or that which was not possible to be done by us on earth. Astonishing, and most amazingly strange it is, that we should thus mock God and ourselves too, in saying Amen to a prayer of this nature! There would be more propriety and truth, with a little alteration,

should we say thus, "O God, forasmuch as without the knowledge of thy will, and faith in thee, we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant, that thy holy word may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." This would be perfectly agreeable to Scripture and reason; the other is manifestly contrary to both. The learned Dr. Stanhope, in his Epistles and Gospels, I know, referreth to the Romans, viii. 8. for a Scripture proof of the sense and agreeableness of the prayer, with the doctrine of the apostle. 'Tis true, I greatly reverence the memory, and respect the works, of that worthy Divine; but I must beg leave to say, he had never rightly and sufficiently considered the words of that Collect, or the sense of the apostle, (how remarkably well, and how judiciously soever, he might have studied other parts of the Epistles and Gospels.) Observe the apostle's expression—"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Which words plainly appear not to be intended or expressed concerning true believers, by St. Paul; nor are they applicable to Christians, any more than they are to devils—no, nor so much neither; for they are only meant of those who followed the idolatrous and wicked practices of the world, those who sacrificed to idols or devils, and not

to God : and the very next words, in the 9th verse, do sufficiently shew us what the apostle meaneth and intendeth thereby, viz. " But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." He meaneth the Christians, who, according to their holy profession, could no longer be as the idolatrous heathens, and walk after the evil customs of the wicked world ; but, being true believers, and having dedicated themselves to God in baptism, walk not after the flesh, as heathens did, but after the Spirit, as becometh Christians ; that is, according to the rules and precepts of the gospel, in opposition to their former heathenish course of life ; for then, while they did walk, as heathens, after the flesh, they could not please God. And give me leave to observe here, that the word *Spirit* is to be taken in a figurative sense : it meaneth not the Spirit of man, nor yet the Spirit of God ; but signifieth the effects of the Spirit, or the gospel of God. " If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," i. e. if so be that the gospel of God, which ye have believed, remain in your hearts, doth establish, strengthen, and settle you. This sense is so plain and evident, that he can have but little learning or understanding who cannot discern it. So the other

other proofs referred to, Eph. iv. 18, 24. are as little to the purpose.

Wherefore I most humbly and heartily pray, that our Church governors would take it into their serious consideration, whether this doth not require a revisal and amendment, as well as some other parts of our Liturgy.

But to return to our last argument—The Rev. Dr. Stanhope, in his *Epistles and Gospels*, vol. II. p. 310. doth very much favour this enthusiastic notion, That the assistance of the word cannot suffice for our salvation, but must wait for the inward working of the Spirit; which, I suppose, was esteemed as a doctrine generally received and uncontested. But it seems strange to me, that ingenious and learned men should ever allow an opinion both erroneous and dangerous, without considering how injurious it may prove to the honour of God and sound religion; how inconsistent it may appear with reason and common experience! Perhaps the truth of it may not hitherto have been disputed, nor, of course, been truly examined; nor can it be supposed to have any better foundation than mere tradition, nor any earlier origin than from the times of the greatest ignorance and superstition,

tion, when truth seemed to lie buried under the rubbish of corruption and errors : and therefore I shall be bold to call it a vulgar error, a strange delusion, which, out of a strict regard for truth, I am in duty bound to prosecute, and to make my assertion good, by examining in a fair and candid manner, the sentiments and expressions of that very learned author ; though I am far from charging the above-named Divine, as the first setter-forth of this strange doctrine, how skilfully soever he may have defended it. See here in his own words, p. 309. " 1. Grace, in the general notion of it, denotes favour and kindness, such as does not only argue a disposition to do the person good on whom it is bestowed, but such as is bestowed freely, and without any obligation, and, in this respect, differs from debt or reward, adequate, and strictly so called : and in this sense, the Grace of God imports that affection and good-will which he bears to men, and all those benefits proceeding thence, which he is either under no engagement to give, or which the engaging himself to give was of his own mere motion, and a free act of mercy." So much is right ; and I allow this as a natural and plain description of Grace, directing our views to the benign Author and Giver of all good gifts. Next of all, he more sparingly acquaints

acquaints us of its true sense and vast importance, but he shews what men generally apprehend by the Grace of God. “2. The Grace of God, in a more restrained sense, is frequently set to signify the Gospel of Jesus Christ: so styled, because the terms and privileges of that salvation tendered by it, are the effect of his infinite and undeserved goodness; the knowledge and publication of it imparted to whom, at what time, and in what measure, he pleases; and the blessings and rewards of it, when so imparted, (though to such, indeed, covenanted mercies, if they perform their part,) yet still so vastly disproportionate in value to their best services, as to deserve the name, not of *Wages*, but of a *Gift*.” Divines, I have observed, are apt to run out into too many divisions concerning Grace, whereby they gain uncertain ideas of it, and give others confused notions, rather than inform men rightly in the nature and truth of it. So this author saith, “The Grace of God, in a more restrained sense, is frequently set to signify the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” From hence it appears very plain to me, that this learned Divine had not a uniform and true notion of Grace; because, I say, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the divine favour, bounty, and assistance of God to mankind; 'tis the last effort of God to sinners, and

and all that ever we must expect, in order to our salvation. This notion properly includes all that is intended and meant by Grace; is the only, universal, unrestrained, and scriptural account, or sense, of Grace: what the apostle St. Paul affirms universally of the gospel of Jesus Christ, saying, in the most express and plain terms imaginable, Tit. ii. 11, &c. "For the Grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us," &c. And what the blessed evangelist St. John means, when he plainly affirmeth, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Neither doth revelation teach us any other Grace of God given to men; "For there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Again, " 3. The Grace of God does sometimes signify a certain inward working of the Spirit, in, and with, the minds of men; which, by suggesting and disposing them to comply with reasonable arguments and good motions, renders the outward ministry of the word, and other means instituted for our salvation, persuasive and successful. This is represented, as the principle of goodness and spiritual life. By this the saints are what they are; this quickens those that were once dead in trespasses and sins; by

this God works in us that which is acceptable in his sight, even to will and to do of his good pleasure ; and by growing in this, we persevere in well-doing, and are kept from falling from our own steadfastness. Thus our being, and living, and moving, in a spiritual sense and capacity, our beginning, our proceeding, our finishing as we ought, all are owing to that Grace and Spirit of God in our souls ; which, with regard to its powers and operations there, answers to that enlivening and invigorating principle, that animates our bodies. From whence it is easy to discern the necessity of this Grace, and that the largest measures of the thing, in either of the two senses foregoing, cannot suffice for our salvation, but must wait for this Third to complete and crown them with success."

Now I declare myself ingenuously, I have not any design to detract from the great worth and merit of this eminent and good man ; for I am not contending against his memorable services to the Christian Church ; but for the truth : and were I only to take the above-cited specimen of Grace in pieces, sentence by sentence, I could shew you absurdities in (almost) every expression ; but I will forbear, and only speak in general, that the whole is merely an imaginary notion,

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full of errors, and void of proofs; for he doth not attempt to name those, who hold, that "the Grace of God, does sometimes signify a certain inward working of the Spirit, in, and with, the minds of men," &c, likewise, he doth not prove by facts or experiences, either from himself or others, that the Spirit doth inwardly operate by suggesting and disposing them to comply with reasonable arguments and good motions, when our natural endeavours, and the concurrence of our reason and will, are left entirely out of the question; 'tis the sole work of the Spirit, suggesting and disposing them to comply: if the author is consistent with himself, in support of his assertion, all must proceed from the *Spirit*, in the course of his argument; and thence he concludes, "This renders the outward ministry of the word, and other means instituted for our salvation, persuasive and successful:" but, all along, he offers to give no reasonable proofs, either from Scripture or any one's experience, of the fact, or indeed any authority for other means to be made successful by this alone. But if we come to the truth of the matter, we shall find it is imaginary, and appears to be a false notion; for this plain reason, Because the Spirit working in, and with, the minds of men, proves too much, viz. That our obedience and best per-

formantes, as men or Christians, is not a voluntary, free, and active obedience, a debt due to God from rational creatures, but the sole work of the Holy Spirit; and that the soul must be altogether passive, will appear, too, from the very terms in which it is expressed, "The Spirit, (observe) suggesting and disposing them to comply," &c.

Now, this inward working of the Spirit, (tho' it be a vain imagination, and an unaccountable delusion,) is represented as the principle of goodness and spiritual life. Be astonished! By this, the saints are what they are, i. e. imaginary and deluded saints; if any one rightly understands the meaning; which seems to be all the demonstration and authority we are like to have, to prove this inward working of the Spirit. And in regard to the texts of Scripture produced in defence of this favourite opinion, when duly considered and rendered, their authority will be entirely against this fond dream, as it were; this Grace of the Spirit being locked up from the senses, when they are asleep, and our reason too. "This quickens those that were once dead in trespasses and sins." The whole chapter Eph. ii. 5. explains the meaning to be the conversion of the Gentiles, and that too by preaching of the word,
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by those means only; "For by Grace are ye saved," v. 8, 17, 20, &c. and Hebr. xiii. referred to in the margin, speaks nothing to that purpose. Phil. ii. 12. "By this God works in us that which is acceptable in his sight, even to will and to do of his good pleasure." This text is always tortured, and most dreadfully handled to sad purposes. Now observe—the apostle doth not tell us, by what means or instruments God worketh in us, but enthusiasts will have it to mean, by the Spirit only; which would entirely frustrate the apostle's exhortation to Christians, and defeat his intended design, where he first commends, and then with authority commands them, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, [the word or his epistle, St. Paul's usual manner of expressing himself, which is very different from the Spirit,] not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Can there be any greater authority? or can any interpretation and meaning be more clear and convincing?

"By growing in this"—In this what? this inward working of the Spirit? Most wretched nonsense! That can never be the meaning of the apostle, or the wisdom of God; but by growing

growing in this knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of the saving doctrines of the gospel, we persevere in well-doing, and are kept from falling from our own steadfastness. This, we may easily discern, is all that the apostle meaneth, without wresting the holy Scriptures.

“Thus our being, and living, and moving, in a spiritual sense and capacity, our beginning, our proceeding, our finishing as we ought, all are owing to that Grace and Spirit of God in our souls.” Most wicked and abominable notion, full of blasphemous impiety ! as if the Spirit of God were actually in our souls ! Ay, surely— as much as our souls are in our bodies. Why then, observe how positively it is here asserted in these plain words, “Much after the same manner, with regard to its powers and operations there, as answers to that enlivening and invigorating principle that animates our bodies.” And to crown this vulgar error with a full and perfect demonstration of its dangerous and mischievous tendency, take the conclusion along with the rest, “From whence it is easy to discern the necessity of this Grace, and that the largest measures of the thing, in either of the two senses foregoing, (observe well,) cannot suffice for our salvation, but must wait for the Third, to complete and crown

crown them with success." Behold then; and be amazed! Supposing the above necessity be indispensable, and easily discernible, this may prove the greatest reason and motive imaginable, to subvert the true faith, to convert the hearts of undiscerning Christians, to make them turn downright infidels, and induce them to believe that all the works, the miracles, and doctrines of the blessed Jesus and his apostles, were in vain, and to no manner of purpose; for so they are here declared to be, without this inward working of the Spirit, "cannot suffice for our salvation." Most astonishing!

Now, with regard to the two former senses, concerning the Grace of God, I shall include them both in one, for I see no necessity of dividing them: because the gospel of Christ is the gift, the divine favour and kindness of God, bestowed to assist mankind; and if Christians despise or neglect it, and do not live answerably to it, then certainly it is received in vain. But here in this third sense of Grace, if it means the inward working of the Spirit in, and with, the minds of men, the very supposition that it can be in vain, is most absurd and impious. For, first, if that disposes the minds of men to comply, it is then impossible that this Grace should be in
vain :

vain : and secondly, if it doth not dispose them to good motions and good actions, then it doth impeach the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God, of great imperfection, impotency, and want of good-will ; nay, doth frustrate his divine purpose in our assistance, and doth not deserve the name of Grace ; for that can be no Grace, which doth the person no good on whom it is bestowed. So his Spirit doth strive with men, doth work in vain, to no end or purpose for promoting their salvation : both which suppositions are monstrous, absurd, and impious. Besides, with regard to this Grace of the Spirit, the soul is divested of its natural freedom and choice ; like wax under the impression of a seal, is merely passive in receiving these inward dispositions ; though in contradiction to the will and power of God, they freely allow the soul to be active in its liberty and choice, to resist the motions of the Spirit : which is, in fact, as much as to say, this imperfect, weak creature, the soul of man, hath a greater liberty, power, and activity of will and spirit, than its Omnipotent Creator. This is so far inconsistent, and directly contradictory to reason and grace, that it is even horrid to think on.

Thus

Thus I have briefly considered and exposed these vulgar and monstrous errors concerning Grace, and the inward working of the Holy Spirit in, and with, the minds of men, without which all other divine Grace and assistance cannot suffice for our salvation, according to the common tenets and blasphemous notions of Enthusiasm: and if the enthusiasts of the present age do not gain a far superior degree above the Quakers, and all that have gone before, with regard to the inward immediate teaching of the Spirit, they are equally upon the level, in maintaining the Scripture to be a dead letter, without the assistance of the Spirit. The erroneous and pernicious consequences both of Methodism and Quakerism are alike perspicuous to the discerning part of mankind, that it would appear superfluous to add more, since Enthusiasm is here so clearly detected, defeated: and for the sake of the unlearned and less discerning part, there are abundantly more useful observations here, laid down in the plainest manner, to guard them against the dangers of being seduced, than there are to be found in any authors I have yet discovered. And this small labour of love may give a just caution to the most ingenious and learned, not to confide in the opinion and autho-

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rity even of the best of men, unless perfectly agreeable with Scripture; and notwithstanding, there are multitudes who run into many opinions contrary and most shocking both to Scripture and reason: but the fault is, they have too good an opinion of themselves, and resolve to fall in with every thing that suits their inclinations. Now give me leave to observe and declare to you, that I do not look upon this to be the case of the author whose sentiments have just been considered; for I am verily persuaded, this learned and eminent Divine never would have attempted to give any instructions concerning the above-cited notion of Grace, but as it was generally received, and too much credited upon trust, and the authority of others long before; being relied on and confided in, as an incontestable part of divinity, and, as far as I can find, had never been justly considered and fairly discussed by men of sense and learning. By the like means, and in some such manner, most errors have obtained incredible currency and footing in the world: and so it happeneth, when men of seeming zeal for religion, and of exemplary piety, do once embrace a notion that hath somewhat extraordinary in its appearance, they will soon be followed by multitudes, whose examples will not easily be overborne, as in this case; though

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it be, in the main, prejudicial and contrary to that honour and sense we ought to have of God and religion.

Thus I have treated of these material and intricate points, without the assistance of men or books : and indeed I could expect nothing from them, as the whole current of their authority runs against me, except the Scriptures. And therefore I shall only recommend it to the consideration of learned men, who have opportunities of more polite reading and conversation, to cast in their laurels as a trophy to the victory ; for I am persuaded, it appears only in a rude country dress, and not so courtly and adorned as I could wish. Nevertheless, let no prejudices or vulgar opinions prevail with my readers. Give me but a candid, a considerate perusal, and I shall ever remain,

Their obliged,

And devoted Servant,

SAMUEL ROE.

it be, in the main, prejudicial and contrary to
that honour and love we ought to have of God
and religion.

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in their leisure, as aiming to the victory. For
I am persuaded, it appears only in a noble country,
and not to count as I should
with. Nevertheless, in the presence of vulgar
opinion prevail, which my readers give me but
a candid, a considerate judgment, and I shall ever
remain.



Their obliged,

And devoted servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON

FURTHER

FURTHER
CONSIDERATIONS
Concerning the SPIRIT of
ENTHUSIASM,

AND

The dangerous CONSEQUENCES which do
ever attend it:

IN

A REPLY to Mr. J * * * W * * L * Y, &c.

FURTHER
CONSIDERATIONS

Concerning the SPIRIT of

ENTHUSIASM

The dangerous CONSEQUENCES which do



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Mr. J * * * W * * L * Y.

S I R,

CHAMPTON-LIKE, you have kept the public stage all fire and thunder; you combat with your antagonists, and give no quarter; you exert your utmost vigour, and cast down all before you, Popes, Pastors, Fathers, Councils, &c. &c. Now, though you are become so formidable, give me leave to enter the lists upon equal terms—fair play, and no quarter.

CONSIDERATIONS
FURTHER

Concerning the SPIRIT of

ENTHUSIASM

AND

The dangerous CONSEQUENCES which do



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Mr. J * * * W * * L * Y.

S I R,

CHAMPION-LIKE, you have kept the public stage all fire and thunder; you combat with your antagonists, and give no quarter; you exert your utmost vigour, and cast down all before you, Popes, Pastors, Fathers, Councils, &c. &c. Now, though you are become so formidable, give me leave to enter the lists upon equal terms—fair play, and no quarter.

quarter. I chuse not to be so voluminous as to carp at your journals, your transports and extatic flights about the Spirit, and your frequent communications with God—blasphemous imaginations! but, once for all, shall prove, that your principles, whoever you borrowed them from, are very erroneous and wicked. Your Sermons and other writings abound with the spirit of Enthusiasm, and are so far from tending to promote true Christianity and the fear of God, that men are thereby encouraged to spiritual pride and delusion, to scepticism and uncharitableness, like the proud Pharisee, to despise and condemn others.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which you have always so strenuously endeavoured to maintain and propagate in your writings, is a principle very irrational and unscriptural, as will be made to appear: for on your own supposition, that the Holy Spirit did inhabit or dwell in our bodies, as you affirm, then it is certain, our reason would have a superior guide in all our actions and designs; because he is the Spirit of truth, he is infallible, and while he dwelleth in us, we could never err; being so intimately united with us, he must have the supreme rule of all our actions, otherwise he would be doing nothing to help our infirm-

infirmities; and so he must have the direction of all our inmost thoughts and actions, and consequently, there would no room be left for the use of our reason, wherever that may be liable to fail us; we should no more be accountable creatures, nor have that liberty and freedom of will to act as rational beings; which, by all experience, is found to be false and absurd.

And such a principle is unscriptural also, having no true and clear foundation in the word of God for it; notwithstanding they pretend to offer some few texts, which are very improperly applied, and understood in a sense contrary to all experience and Scripture. The principal the Methodists stand upon, is 1 Cor. vi. 19. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" These words, 'tis true, may be set off with strange appearance, to captivate the judgments of undiscerning and unlearned persons; but, as a learned Divine observes, "In the body of man, as well as in his soul, the image of God consisteth; because the soul worketh on the body, and by it: hence the members of the body are said to be "instruments of righteousness." Rom. vi. 13. As they are instrumental to so excellent a purpose,

as they are subservient to grace and holiness, and as the virtues of the Holy Spirit are exerted by them, they are part of the image of God; for it is not to be questioned that the whole man is God's image. Therefore, though the divine likeness doth not equally shine in all parts, yet this corporeal part of man, in some degree, shareth in that image: for which reason, the bodies of good men are stiled the temples of the Holy Ghost."—See Edwards's Survey of the various Methods of Religion, Vol. I. p. 21. Again, they affirm the same of Christ, from 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Know ye not your ownelves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Both these texts, as well as many others, will admit of a very plain solution, from a trope very usual in Scripture, where the Holy Ghost is put for the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, and Jesus Christ is put for the Doctrines and Assistances of the Gospel; he being the divine Author and substance of the Gospel, the cause is put to express the effects resulting from it. To think that the blessed apostle speaks in a literal sense, that the real and personal presence of Christ is in every individual Christian, is as great an absurdity as the Popish doctrine of Transubstantiation; and what is more likely, than that they are both derived from the same corrupt Church?

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for so he may as well be in a wafer: if Mr. W-l-y, the oracle of Methodism, can prove the one, he, by the same chain of arguments, may demonstrate the other, to the great honour of priestcraft. I will not give my readers the trouble to have recourse by reference to Dr. Hammond's Paraphrase, for a plainer sense of these texts; but shall place it before him. Observe these words, "The Holy Ghost which is in you," he makes a note "*among* you." Paraphrase on the 19th verse—"Your bodies are, by your being Christians, consecrated to the service of his Spirit, (and the governors of the Church, of which sort the incestuous person is thought to be, set apart in all purity to discharge that function to which they are consecrated, by receiving the Holy Ghost.) This benefit of the Spirit ye have received from God; and it is an engagement to you, to think your own bodies are not now at your own disposal to use them as you please, (as in your state of Gentilism, or without that engagement, ye might be tempted to imagine.)" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Jesus Christ is in you," Dr. Hammond notes, "*among* you." His paraphrase on the whole verse—"Make trial by what you please, whether I am not an apostle of Christ, and have planted Christ among you, taught you the true faith, Have

there not been such evidences of my apostleship, (See c. xii. v. 12.) such assurances of Christ's giving me authority of his presence among you in my ministry, that you yourselves cannot chuse but acknowledge it? Yes, certainly there are, if you are not the most senseless, wretched persons in the world, the most unfit for God to approve or wink at." Here is very slender authority to support the imaginations of Enthusiasts. Again, I know it is said of Christ, that the Divinity dwells in him, "For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii. 9. But it is never so said of any one of the apostles, nor of them all together, that the Holy Ghost did ever dwell in some one, or in every one of them, at any time; neither in any of the primitive Christians, much less in every one of them; though we are assured, some few amongst them had singular and eminent spiritual gifts. How can men be so vain, as to think the Holy Spirit is in them, to guide and direct them, when it is only said of the holy prophets and apostles, that "They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?" 2 Pet. i. 21. From whence I conclude, that there can be no grounds in the Scripture for this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our bodies, in every private Christian, as they affirm, or he is none of his.

But

But I will prove by the great apostle St. Paul, that such a notion, or principle, is directly contradictory to the power and word of God. And this he plainly shews in 1 Cor. xii. where the operations and gifts of God's Holy Spirit are said to be *given*, and not to *inhabit*; and that only for the present, on certain necessary occasions, as God saw it convenient for the use and advantage of the first Christians. Ver. 7.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” Such persons who had those extraordinary gifts and operations, had a supernatural power to exhibit them for the public benefit of the Church, and not for a constancy; as appears by the words following, and the nature of those gifts. Ver. 8. “For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, faith, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another, working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally, as he will.”

Where it is to be observed, God giveth not the

Holy

Holy Ghost, no, nor yet the gifts of the Spirit wholly, to every man; but he distributeth them severally and sparingly, by dividing those gifts; and not by the Spirit inhabiting, abiding in the man, as Mr. W--l-y supposes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our bodies. We may well stand amazed at the thought! Vain man! consider, God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few, and learn to think of him with the utmost reverence and godly fear.

Thus, this leading tenet, this favourite principle of Enthusiasm is unscriptural, is most absurd and impious; and all persons whatsoever, who have wrote and think in the same manner as Mr. W--l-y and his followers, launch out beyond the bounds of reason and revelation. Nay, so far is the Holy Spirit from dwelling in us, that there are not the least footsteps of his working those powerful gifts and operations in men, since the times of the apostles, when the Holy Spirit by them compleated all revelation, in the canon of the New Testament, for the benefit and establishment of the universal Church of Christ, in all ages to come. And we know for certain, all those Gifted Brethren so called, who have pretended to the Spirit and spiritual operations, have appeared to be false, and no other

other than mere impostors; which is a demonstration sufficient to satisfy the understanding of mankind, and to stop the torrent of Enthusiasm carried on by misguided zealots, supposing they are not quite destitute of reason and consideration.

Besides, the Holy Spirit testifieth by St. Paul to Timothy, 2 Ep. iii. 15. "The holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," then not through the Spirit; which faith, the apostle asserts, cometh by hearing too; and this is the true doctrine of the Gospel, "Now, (says St. Paul) if any man preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 9. Christ, then, hath given us his holy word, his ministers and sacraments; which are sufficient for our salvation, provided we truly believe and obey them. The Christian Church seems to want no other assistances, after God had provided so certain and infallible a rule in the written word, set down in the most universal and polite language then in use; and soon after, as the Church did spread, became translated into the several known languages of the world; when the wisdom of God thought fit to withdraw his Spirit, together with the extraordinary

ordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, from the Church.

Besides, how can the Christian Church stand in need of such helps as the indwelling and inward teaching of the Spirit, since all that is necessary for mankind to know and believe to eternal salvation, is contained in the Scriptures, and these are faithfully translated into the common dialects of most nations in the known world: and the use of printing hath dispersed them into the hands of most Christian families, except in Roman Catholic countries, where the vulgar sort are denied the use of the Scriptures; and there indeed ignorance, pretended miracles, superstition, and priestcraft, still prevail so far, as to prevent their reformation: nay, were they allowed the free use of Scripture, they could not chuse but plainly see the errors of their own Church, and be ashamed.

Those sacred oracles do plainly, and in many cases sensibly, convince men of their faults and misdoings, upon the common and general notions of mankind, and not by any private judgment: against such universal testimonies no one can judge for himself; every man is, and ought to be, determined by that general voice and law of reason;

reason; unless you are labouring to over-run the world with eternal scepticism and infidelity.

Let me pursue the matter a little further.— From whence does all this wonderful condescension arise? You will give every man leave to judge of Scripture for himself—'tis his birth-right; though you are so forward to obtrude your own sentiments upon the world as the standard of truth and sound divinity; no salvation but in your way! Now, supposing you are false, it is to be hoped, that no one shall perish everlastingly merely for opposing your errors: but remember, I am in duty bound by my ordination, “to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s word:” and it is plain, you are no more infallible than others, but rather more faulty, obstinate, and busy, in propagating strange doctrines, than a good man would chuse to be; and therefore let us banish and drive these away.

Mr. W---l-y says, “This has been the grand question, from the beginning, between the Protestants and the Romanists; Protestants hold every man must judge for himself; Papists, the Church must judge for every man.” No, Sir--- this is no question; no, nor grand contest nei-

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ther--which ought to have been duly weighed and considered, before you had so peremptorily asserted a point of this nature. It is certain, in necessary matters which concern our real happiness and salvation, there can never be too great caution, and too many helps of judgment used, as the true sense and interpretation of Scripture is of the utmost importance to every man; because a wrong sense may be his own ruin, may bring in heresies and damnable doctrines, and possibly, too, endanger the loss of many souls: and yet every man, you say, must judge for himself--he is not to take the sense of the Church: this is the very point in debate, which if you fly from, you are fighting the wind. Give me leave to shew the absurdity of your position in a familiar way.

Through every case in life, where a person has not skill and judgment to prosecute his intentions, it is natural for every man to consult those that are best able to inform him, and to be guided by their directions. How many thousands in the world, who are entirely ignorant both in matters of faith and practice, whom the word of God, truly explained, would infallibly secure from error and sin! this word they cannot understand, because they are ignorant and unlearned,

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and are therefore very much troubled in conscience, till they are informed. To whom should they seek for assistance, but to those who are esteemed best able to direct and guide them truly in these greatest difficulties, whose instructions and advice they readily comply with? Suppose it were the Church: this can no more be said to be their own private sense and judgment, they are guided by, but the sense of the Church; because they were ignorant and incompetent to judge for themselves. Besides, what better and surer guide would any one desire than that of the Church, which has stood the test of so many ages, and is by all wise and good men continually approved and relied on, as the best expounder and keeper of holy writ? Nor am I obliged to defend the Church of Rome, or any other Church, which expoundeth not one Scripture agreeably to the meaning of other Scripture passages, or not according to the just sense of the purest and primitive times.

Again, as to every private Christian being a judge of Scripture for himself, is no ways agreeable to reason or Scripture; because it is morally impossible for every one to understand and know the true sense and meaning of the Holy Spirit in every passage of Scripture, or for any one

man, especially if ignorant and unlearned, to be capable of finding the true interpretation of the sacred writings, wherein the most learned Commentators have failed, in explaining the great truths contained in them; and certainly, the wise ends and secret purposes of God's will are not to be discovered by every man. Whence it is undeniable, that no one can be a judge for himself in those points he doth not know, or understand what the will of God may be.

But moreover, the assertion is contrary to Scripture: for St. Peter, speaking of St. Paul's Epistles, says, "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest; as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." 2 Pet. iii. 16. Here is an infallible testimony against all that Mr. W-l-y hath advanced for the right of every person to judge for himself. His proof, too, in support of this right, is very absurd—"Because every man must give an account of himself to God." Now, how should any one give an account of what he doth not know, or cannot pretend to understand; who hath neither studied books nor men, but is wholly involved in his own little self? Nay, he cannot possibly understand, without competent learning or a
good

good guide; nevertheless, he must give an exact account of himself, though he must not agree to the judgment of the Church, whether he conforms himself or not, to the rule of God's word.

To help out this dilemma, every private person, according to Mr. W--l-y's sentiments, must have an immediate or inward teaching of the Holy Spirit: but this is the weakest and worst of all arguments; for if the Spirit of God helpeth to the meaning of Scripture, that can be no private sense, and consequently, not the judgment of the man himself, but the impulse and motion of the Spirit; and mankind being thus assisted, there never could be any divisions or controversies in religion; because the Spirit is Truth itself, and all men would agree to the Spirit. But as we can never find any such agreement, even among the most eminent professors, under the best reformed establishments, or among those of the same sects, this plainly shews, they are not internally guided by the assistances of the Spirit: and moreover, were they so guided, it could no longer be said to be a man's own private sense or judgment, but the infallible assurance of the Spirit; which is entirely inconsistent with, and utterly overthrows, the very foundation of your whole scheme, the
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nature of private judgment, and all that can be said in vindication of it.

I wonder, Mr. W-l-y, your great penetration and judgment, with the help of the Spirit, could not discern this: but you are certainly wrong in your brains; or your brains, with your scholarship, for a long time have been the wrong way in your head; else you could never think so wrong, write so wrong, teach so wrong, study so wrong, and act so wrong. Now, if my information doth put you upon rectifying your understanding, I perform a most laudable and skilful operation; and deserve, at least, your sincere friendship, and merit your greatest acknowledgments.

Bad as your argument is, *litera scripta manet*; you must abide by it, though you give up the point in dispute. Take your own words—"But, blessed be God, we have a far surer, a far plainer rule than this; a rule for which we need not wade through all the lumber of past ages, nor wander to the ends of the earth; it is the Word of God, interpreted by the Spirit of God, whom you leave quite out of the question: and yet without him, opening and enlightening your understanding, 'tis sure you can have no more
faith

faith than a devil; you never can, unless you lean, not on Fathers, Pastors, Popes, or any man, or number of men living, but on the living God, on the Spirit of truth, 'whom the Father (saith our Lord) will send in my Name.' John xiv. 26. 'He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' I think you dare not say, that this promise does not belong to every private Christian; not to the Apostles and Pastors only." Sure you must think no one understandeth Scripture but yourself. It was never, in effect, made good to any private Christians, but to the apostles only; but by and through their ministry, all Christians receive the benefits of their inspiration. This promise, in its natural and primary sense, is so plain, that no one but a person of Mr. W-l-y's artful disposition could ever suggest it should belong to every private Christian; it is most plain, none but those who were familiarly instructed by the mouth of Christ, the very apostles, were intended by it, on whom the Holy Ghost (according to that most true promise) in a wonderful manner descended, and inspired them with the Spirit of truth, to know all things necessary, and to remember all things whatsoever Christ before had said unto them.

Now,

Now, supposing that every Christian must have this Spirit of God to interpret by, then there must be an immediate end of all Gospel ministry and public teaching; because, it would be useless and absurd to teach the Spirit: and you may all wonder, that Mr. W—l-y and others should be so ambitious and forward of preaching, (were it not for worldly gains,) especially the doctrines of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, inward teaching, and divine faith, which if Christians have not, he affirms, they will perish everlastingly. Strange doctrine! With much truer reason it may be affirmed, Mr. W—l-y has nothing of the true spirit of Christianity, which doth not allow men to be so uncharitable, as to judge and condemn one another in this manner. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." Luke vi. 37. See 1 Cor. xiii. 1, &c. where St. Paul shews, that though he had all faith, so that he could remove mountains, (which is much more than J. W—l-y and his followers ever pretended to,) and have no charity, he was nothing, (not deserving the title of a Christian;) nay, the gift of prophecy, to understand all mysteries and all knowledge, it profiteth nothing without charity. And notwithstanding that particular

ticular divine faith you pretend to have from
 the Spirit only, I can assert, from a more sure
 word of prophecy, you have no divine know-
 ledge or faith above what the Scripture teacheth;
 and therefore, Mr. W—l-y's inward teaching
 is not from the Spirit of truth, because he ma-
 nifestly contradicteth an Apostle who was truly
 inspired, and expressly assures us, Rom. x. 17.
 "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the
 word of God." Which word of God is an in-
 fallible rule of faith and practice to all true be-
 lievers, and, if not corrupted by seducing spirits,
 is sufficient for the salvation of all Christians who
 live in obedience thereto: though Mr. W—l-y
 is so audacious as to assure you, that "without
 the Spirit you can have no more faith than a
 devil. You never can." Then must he be as
 faithless, as destitute and void of saving know-
 ledge, as a rebel Spirit; for there is neither rea-
 son nor Scripture to give you any hopes or
 grounds that you must have it from the inward
 motions of the Spirit of God; as I shall clearly
 demonstrate in the subsequent parts of this trea-
 tise: and his own assurance of this divine faith
 is no proof at all. "It is not to Pastors or Fa-
 thers in Christ, but to all private Christians, that
 St. John speaks in that parallel Scripture, Little
 children, even now there are many Antichrists;

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but ye have——What?—An infallible guide at Rome?—Pastors?—Fathers?—Councils?—not a word of these—but an anointing from the Holy One, an inward teaching from the Holy Ghost, and knowing all things necessary for your preservation from these seducers, and for your eternal salvation: it is divine teaching which gives divine faith. This all men living cannot do; it is the gift, it is the work of God; and whatever you have besides, if you have not this faith, you will perish everlastingly.” If you are no Pope, you pronounce and denounce with much greater assurance, as if you were alone infallible. Such expressions are unbecoming our finite understandings, unless God had given us the most assured and infallible demonstrations of the impossibility of salvation, without inward divine teaching; but indeed there is neither reason, nor experience, nor Scripture, to bear us out in this pretence, That faith is wrought in us immediately, or by inward means. The only faith that we and all Christians are concerned about, as to our salvation, is wrought mediately and outwardly, by the ministry and word of God. And the apostle gives an infallible assurance of it, Rom. x. 17. Which faith alone is sufficient for the instruction of all Christians; and to live according to it, is all that God requires on our parts,

parts, in order to eternal happiness. Nothing can be more repugnant to Scripture, than to assert there is any other divine faith, or inward teaching.

Therefore, to depend on any such rule of faith as you lay down by inward teaching, would infallibly unhinge all Scripture faith, would create endless uncertainties, and bring in all kinds of heresies and schisms. Truly, every fantastic dream, nay, every thought of these men, thus supposed to be inwardly guided, would pass for inspiration, or the motions of the Holy Spirit: whereas they have ever been found to be no other than delusions, the suggestions of a brain-sick zeal, or Enthusiasm,—if it deserves no worse characters. You may pretend what you please to the contrary,

But how do you defend this inward teaching? Truly, by a Scripture proof which bears no sense nor relation to the point in dispute; and then you bring another Scripture to help it out, which, rightly interpreted, is very full and clear against you. This was, indeed, a very ingenious shift to pass from a peculiar promise, made good to the Apostles only, to another general Scripture, as your proof; which is no promise, nor is it

parallel in sense and meaning, as you would have it to be. 1 John ii. 20, 27. This unction or anointing the divine apostle speaks of, if you can discern at all, means no more than the Testimony of the Holy Ghost, which God had given to confirm the truths of the Gospel, which is preached among you. This teaching you have from an Apostle, on whom the Holy Ghost descended in a miraculous manner, on the day of Pentecost, which was well known to all the strangers then assembled at Jerusalem, (See Acts ii. 7, 8, 9, 10, &c.) whose personal evidence among you, is conviction infallibly sufficient to fortify you against all seducers. Speaking of himself and the other apostles, "They did bear witness to the divine truths of the Gospel, they did shew and declare them unto you;" as he tells us in the beginning of this Epistle; which could mean no inward teaching. "The same anointing or testimony teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." And what that teaching was, the Apostle had before reminded them of, ver. 24. No inward teaching, I assure you—nothing of the Spirit of God moving or enlightening their hearts; very far from it, Sir—quite the reverse to your inward motions. It was altogether the outward teaching, as all
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the world may plainly see and understand, by comparing it with the 24th verse. "Let that, therefore, abide in you, which ye have *heard* from the beginning: if that which ye have *heard* from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." If that *which ye have heard*, saith the Apostle, not the inward teaching of the Spirit: parallel to *that of the anointing*, The outward teaching which ye have heard, "even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Can any words, can any testimony be more clear and intelligible? which is the express meaning of the Apostle in this general Epistle, and perfectly agrees with reason, with all experience, and the plain doctrines of Scripture. But your sense of the inward teaching, this unction and the anointing from the Holy One, is entirely absurd, without any foundation from the words of this Apostle, and contrary to the whole system of Scripture. Thus making use of Scripture, and applying it in the manner you do, is very unbecoming the character of a scholar, is ridiculous, and injurious to God and man. It stands upon you, Sir, to prove, that any one Christian ever had the Holy Spirit, the unction, the anointing and inward teaching you boast of, since the Apostles; for I am assured, it can be no ordinary blessing; which
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if you do not fairly perform, your doctrine is all imposture and vain.

Wherefore, I fear, all such as teach your doctrines will be found to be seducers of men, who have no Scripture, neither reason, nor experience, to confirm the truth of your Gnostick principles. And I am persuaded, notwithstanding all your bold pretences to the Spirit, you will never attempt to give the world any extraordinary proofs of the truth and divinity of those tenets peculiar to your Sect. And what can the world say of you, but that you are an enemy to truth and Christianity, who have attempted to teach and defend such wild doctrines; and as the foundation of errors, to fix this position upon Protestantism, That every man must judge for himself? the true consequence of which is, That every one may think and determine whatever he likes concerning Scripture. This is a principle absurd and unscriptural, suited to no establishment but to Enthusiasts and seducers of mankind. For, whence have sprung all those scandalous errors, opinions, and damnable doctrines; those heresies, schisms, and continual feuds, that have infested the Church through all ages, from the times of the Apostles, but from the pride of men, from this very private spirit, this private sense

sense and judgment of holy Scripture, that every man, by your account, has a right to? And when are we ever like to see an end of all these evils and troubles in the Church of Christ, so long as that faith, which was once delivered to the saints, must give way to inward teaching, that a Christian can have no more faith than a devil without it? This is an hard saying; who can prove it? nay, unless you prove it, who can bear it?

Once more to the point—The main difference, Sir, between the Romanists and Protestants, is this, They suffer not the vulgar to read the Scriptures—We do. I grant, as to the precepts of the Gospel, and points necessary to salvation, every man is to judge for himself as a Christian, how to perform obedience to the will of God, so plainly revealed to be his duty; and whereinsoever he might deviate from it, to reform and repent; because he is accountable to God for his actions. This, Sir, is a very different point from determining the meaning of Scripture, and judging for himself: and therefore, Protestants earnestly recommend to all Christians the use of the Bible, that they may be instructed how to lead their lives, and may receive benefit and comfort from reading those divine oracles of truth and wisdom.

wisdom. And this is what our Church particularly encourages ; but does not set up or allow every private Christian to be a judge or interpreter of Scripture, be it for himself or others ; and I think you will find, she hath wisely guarded against every inconsistent abuse of any such private judgment, in her XXth Article of religion, agreeable to the point I have cleared up from reason and Scripture.

We may say of the holy Scriptures as of other authors, the more you read and study them, the better you will understand their sense and meaning ; which is a clear proof against the inward teaching of the Spirit. Therefore, the Clergy in particular, who are to teach others, ought to make it their chief study. We certainly ought to make use of all the helps and advantages of learned men and books, before any one can be a competent judge of Scripture controversies, and understand the true sense of the Spirit. In this Mr. J. W—l-y seems perfectly to agree with me, who saith of the Scripture, " In order to judge right, we use both Fathers and Councils, and the living children of God ; though allowing none of these to be infallible, nor all of them together : nor is this a wild system, but a wise primitive method, though we know the whole
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body of Romish guides are against us." Here, you see, Mr. W—l-y leaves the Spirit quite out of the question, as well he may; for this, indeed, is the only means we can use, since the extraordinary assistances of the Spirit are withdrawn from the Church. But again observe, how amazingly he doth contradict himself, when he enters upon his high rant of the Spirit! He setteth aside Popes, Pastors, Fathers, and Councils! nothing will then do, but the Spirit! "An unction! an anointing from the Holy One! an inward teaching from the Holy Ghost! it is the divine teaching which gives this divine faith; this all men living cannot do; it is the gift, it is the work of God." How doth he exclaim against himself! nay, how absurd and inconsistent is this with sense and reason, the wise and primitive method asserted above!

Now, for the cure of Methodism, let every one examine to what an extravagant degree of insanity and madness this spirit of Enthusiasm doth drive people: search what great multitudes run wild after this strange way of teaching! how conceited and sceptical they grow with it! their affections are drawn away from the Church and their lawful teachers; they then grow mopish and giddy after the spirit of delusion, are cold

and languid to all virtue and true religion afterwards. How many poor creatures have been driven to despair and melancholy, to become their own executioners, after they have been your followers! How should it ever be otherwise, when they are guided by false teaching, and a false Spirit within? Who can number them? And, to gain you credit, you may presume, no doubt, by your spiritual impulses, to send them all to heaven, as a certain Coachman and a noble Lord. Now, in what great measure you may be accountable for these dreadful evils! Consider—for God doth know.

Moved with the Spirit, be sure!—as any one may judge what spirit it must be, when these teachers transgress their bounden duty to God, and make no account to break through their obedience to human authority, their own oaths and subscriptions, when they maintain and teach such unsound and impious doctrines! Judge again, when many run, whom God hath not sent to teach, and enter upon a sacred office, contrary to Christ's own institution, and into other men's boundaries, to sow tares among the wheat, where the Gospel is truly preached; and this, presumptuously, without any extraordinary call or mission from God, against all order and
good

good government : and we are certain, they go about teaching, contrary to law and human appointment ; unless by a law of Mr. Ch——s W——l-y's, who said once to me, That God had opened their mouths, and God forbid we should stop them ; or by the pious ordinations of Mr. W——l-y, W——t——d, or such others, who send forth these teachers as Apostles at large, to blow up the flames of Enthusiasm, and to forward their grand operations, though manifestly contrary to the peaceful settlement of the Church and State.

How many ministers and parishes have been molested and infested with Methodist teachers ! how many notorious riots, disturbances, and evil practices, have they occasioned throughout his Majesty's dominions ! You now seem to triumph against justice and law, by a mere quirk, That Church people are not intended by the law : but more is the pity, there is not a special law to punish such notorious offenders, who dare commit such acts as the Dissenters are ashamed to do, and give a general dissatisfaction to all sober, well-affected persons to our happy establishment ! How many persons and families may you hear of, who have been driven to desperation and ruin in their temporals ! and I wish

their souls too, through their means, may not be eternally ruined by uncharitableness, spiritual pride, and presumption in the end. Miserable gain ! how do they squander away their useful time, and neglect their necessary callings, to attend upon, and strive above measure to pay, these oracles of Methodism ! But their leading teachers love to have it so, they are continually delighted with great crouds ; which is not at all to be wondered at, seeing how plentifully they have enriched themselves, at the expence of their unwary followers.

But I cannot reflect on these things without the utmost horror, nor keep a diary of the mischiefs done by Methodism. May they consider seriously with themselves, how bitter it will prove in the end, should they gain the whole world, and lose their own souls !

I shall not trouble my readers much further : But give me leave, Mr. W—l-y, *because you are so full of the Spirit*, to desire you would let me know, why all men living cannot teach divine faith ? Are not the holy Scriptures allowed to be an infallible rule of faith ? They were purposely revealed to instruct mankind in the true faith and fear of God, i. e. the knowledge of his di-

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vine will; they plainly instruct us in our duty to him, and to one another; and by them we are taught of God, in all diyine faith and godly practice. Now, can no one man, nor all men living, teach the holy Scriptures? To what intent, then, must they be given? Certainly, that through them we might have faith and hope in God, through Jesus Christ. 2do, Whether doth God give this gift, this diyine faith you boast of, absolutely to all, or conditionally to some? Is it the work of God in the children of this world, or those only who are *your* chosen ones and followers? 3tio, Why myself, and all good Christians, who know of no such strange doctrines in the Scripture, should perish everlastingly?—In regard to these points, prove yourself to be a person of more sound principles and better judgment, if you can.

Finally, to be short with you—imo, The indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God is a groundless, impious conceit, contradictory to the awful majesty and honour of Almighty God: it horribly debaseth his infinite purity, his immaculate essence and glory, his truth, and all other attributes.

2do, Notwithstanding you are so full of this inward divine faith, I affirm, if you have not a true Scripture faith, grounded on the word of God, you can have no more faith than an infidel.

3tio, As to your divine and inward teaching, which begets this divine faith; and you affirm of others, "If you have it not, you perish everlastingly;" to your shame, I say as the apostle, though you had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mystery and all knowledge, and had all faith, and whatever you have besides, it profiteth nothing: You are not the CHRISTIAN.

Thus, Sir, I have fairly laid open my thoughts to you as you could wish; and, that you may know who you have to deal with, I will not contend in the dark: though this appears not in the Chronicle, you will chance to meet with it in public, from your real friend, who seeks your welfare and conversion.

AS the Title and Subject carry a mystical appearance, and are not common, they may naturally attract the inspection of the curious, and deserve their most serious attention. The design is not only laudable, but to establish some useful truths of the greatest importance to the present and future settlement of peace in the Christian Church.

As the supposed impulses and motions of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, have a long time engrossed the imaginations of many, so as to become a main part of their *Credenda*, it will be as difficult work to persuade the contrary, as to change the accustomed habits of nature: tho', upon serious examination, they will be found groundless and false. Now, to prevent the growing evils and mischiefs that are daily occasioned by

by such absurd notions, I have for this purpose formed a Scriptural or Golden Key of Knowledge, (it may deserve that title for its excellent use) whereby many intricate texts of Scripture may be opened for the better instruction of Christians, and very necessary to preserve all persons from such gross impositions; for by this help, they may try and discern the Spirits, whether they are of God: for it is most certain, if they pretend to inward teaching and impulses of the Holy Spirit, they are not of God.

It is then to be well observed, that the word *Spirit* is frequently used in the sacred writings to express the *effects* of the Holy Spirit: and on the contrary, it will appear, that the word *Devil* is also used to signify the *effects* of the devil, that is, for *Sin*. Take some instances thereof—
 1 Epist. Pet. v. 8. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Which text cannot be literally true of the Devil; for he neither walketh about, nor does he roar like a lion. That, indeed, would make him too notorious, betray his wiles, and terrify the world from being taken captive by him: but it is exactly true of Sin and Sinners, who walk about as a fierce and roaring lion, seeking

seeking whom to devour. Again, it is said, James iv. 7. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee." Which cannot mean that old Serpent, the Devil, or Satan; for he doth not attempt or accost mankind as he did our first parents; nor does the gracious and good God suffer him to come within our reach, to encounter with man, or us to combat with one so much our superior in spiritual power and understanding; and to resist him would be greatly above the abilities of our weak nature: but it is undoubtedly to be understood of sin—Resist Sin, and it will flee from us; or we can put it far off, and fly from it.

Compare these, and many other places of Scripture to the same purpose, and this will serve to solve those intricate expressions in the Gospel, which speak of persons being possessed with the devil, and of casting out devils, &c. that is, as the Scripture explaineth itself, Matth. xvii. 14, 15. compared with ver. 18. Verse 14. "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic, and sore vexed; for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." A plain description of an epileptic, and not of

one possessed with a devil. Verse 18. "And Jesus rebuked the devil; [i. e. if we would understand the Evangelist properly and truly, he meaneth the distemper, thus: And Jesus rebuked the distemper, the effects of Satan and our first parents sin,] and he departed out of him; [more truly, the disease departed from him,] and the child was cured from that very hour." Can any interpretation be more plain?

To confirm our apprehension and understanding in this matter, we read, the first promise God made of the Messiah was very soon after the fall of man, Gen. iii. 15. where the seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head, i. e. should vanquish his conquest, and crush his malice, which wrought our fall and misery. And, I presume, the blessed Saviour of men did actually overcome the power of the Devil, in every instance of depravity and corruption which beset our natures, since he, malicious adversary! procured the unhappy sin of our first parents. So, I apprehend, the divine and blessed Jesus, by the power of his will, or by his word alone, could make the Devil and all his train to tremble, and be eternally confounded, through at the greatest distance, even in the remotest corners of hell itself. And therefore, we read in the Gospels,

Gospels, of Jesus rebuking unclean, foul Spirits; see Mark i. 25. also ix. 25. who are also called the Devil. See Luke iv. 33, and the following verses; consult also Luke ix. 42. Now, what greater rebuke could the Devil suffer, than to find his infernal power and cruelty overcome, crushed, and defeated, by the mere word and command of the Son of man, (the seed of the woman,) when he biddeth the lepers to be cleansed, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the blind to see, and the dead to be raised up; when he only commandeth to be whole, of whatsoever diseases, and 'tis immediately effected at his word; to heal all manner of corporeal infirmities, which are most graciously cured; and when he exerteth his divine mercy and goodness, to forgive sins, to cast out the abominable evils and spiritual corruptions of our souls, to dethrone the Devil and all his tyranny there over our human nature; by his miraculous power and gracious redemption, recovering lost man from the captivity of sin and death, reinstating him once more in the favour of God; by these means bruising the serpent's head, bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel?

As for my own judgment, I profess, I can in no wise believe the Scriptures in such a sense, as to imagine, the all-wise and good God would ever suffer that accursed Spirit and apostate rebel to seize the bodies of mankind, to enter into them, and to take possession either of their souls or bodies, to torture both with all the force of his diabolical nature, and beyond any conception! He only deceived our first parents, and from the effects of their sin, all spiritual disorders and corporeal infirmities have infected our souls and bodies. To this very end and purpose, we are informed, our blessed Saviour came into the world, to destroy the works of the Devil, to cure the spiritual disorders and corruptions which taint our souls, to heal the infirmities and vices which pollute our bodies, to improve and amend our natures, to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, and to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And thus we are informed in chap. x. of the Acts of the Apostles, and ver. 38, concerning Jesus Christ, who, as it is reported, "Went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the Devil: for God was with him." From which expression, we may readily apprehend, that Jesus healed those who were oppressed with infirmities and sin.

fin. Now, one main end and design in his commission given to the Apostles, was, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, or by his authority, among all nations; and he had a divine power, not only to heal our sinful natures, but to forgive sins also; and so he testifieth in the Gospel: "I cast out devils, or put away those spiritual corruptions and vices of men's souls; I do cures, or heal the disorders and infirmities of men's bodies;" that is, He renewed our natures, and restored a more primitive degree of innocence and purity both to our souls and bodies: as Luke xiii. 32. "Behold, I cast out devils, I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Again, we may read in Luke viii. 2. of "certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." Sure, we cannot understand that word to mean devils, wicked and apostate Spirits; one of which, by his malicious, fierce, and devilish nature, were he let loose, and permitted to exercise his infernal cruelty upon men, would torture the soul and body to the utmost extremities, inconceivably beyond all the present disorders and infirmities to which we are subject: but we may understand she was healed of so many spiritual evils or sins, devilish and
sinful

sinful dispositions, the infirmities incident to our
 natures, as composed of soul and body; which
 may be thus figuratively expressed by *evil Spirits*
and infirmities: Or the man we read of in the
 same chapter, and the other in chap. v. of St.
 Mark, who was certainly raging, distracted, and
 mad, not in his right mind, possessed with insa-
 nity, innumerable evil thoughts, and outrageous
 disorders; who is said to have the Legion; because
 the man was tormented with many sinful distrac-
 tions, evil imaginations, and frantic infirmities,
 with unaccountable raging fits, such as a distress-
 ed man, under the tortures of madness and phren-
 zy, is miserably subject to. But, so soon as the
 merciful Saviour of men had healed him, he was
 then said to be clothed, and in his right mind.
 I do not deny, that the blessed Jesus had a divine
 and uncontrollable authority, a commanding
 power over evil spirits, and devils too. More-
 over, it is observable, that after our blessed Sa-
 viour had rebuked the Devil, (the power or cause
 of that man's insanity,) and demanded his name,
 he readily answered, it was "Legion; for we
 are many," as St. Mark relates it; and as St.
 Luke says, "Because many devils were entered
 into him." A Legion of spiritual disorders and
 grievous infirmities, many evil dispositions, had
 seized on that man, which so distracted him, and
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made his condition worse than most others, who were inflicted only with bodily pains and weaknesses: this is the sense of both the Evangelists on this deplorable case. And is it not an usual Metonymie in Scripture, for persons to be represented as speaking under different names and characters; as here, the disordered man is talking with our blessed Saviour, telling his infirmities, and answering his questions, under the character of the unclean Spirit. And though this man's evil condition had been of ever so long standing, his disorders the most complicate and obstinate, so as to be out of the power of human skill to remedy, yet this history serves to inform us, that our blessed Saviour had power, not only over some one, or some few disorders, to which our natures are liable from the fall of our first parents, which brought a Legion, or indefinite number of sins and disorders upon all mankind; but had power also over all sins and disorders, all evil dispositions, (call them evil Spirits, or Devils, if you please,) to cast them out, and to heal them. Hence we see the penmen of holy writ express the odious deformities and baseness of sin in the most hyperbolical and vehement manner, under the character of the Devil, the Arch-rebel against his Almighty Creator, who

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is represented as the father of lies, the author of sin, and a murderer from the beginning.

To retrieve mankind from the various errors on this critical subject, which have puzzled the learned of all ages, we must observe St. Matth. chap. viii. St. Mark v. and St. Luke viii. All relate this miracle of the possessed with devils, and also what happened to the herd of swine; and whether there were two men, as St. Matthew, or one, as St. Mark and St. Luke, record the affair, is not material; such a small variation doth not contradict the truth of each other's narrative; which difference hath nothing inconsistent in the Evangelists, because St. Matthew names two dæmoniacs, saying the truth; the other Evangelists, which name but one, yet not denying that there were more, must necessarily say true also, which I shall easily reconcile: for though the latter Evangelists mention but one man coming to Jesus, in the beginning of the history, yet they both speak in the plural, as of more than one, in the sequel; which confirms the truth of St. Matthew, and doth in a clear manner illustrate the undoubted verity of the whole relation. Now observe well upon this transaction, what St. Matthew mentions briefly of the two men, what St. Mark relates in a more particular manner of one,

one, and St. Luke takes special notice of in the other; and so from the three Evangelists, we have a perfect and complete narrative of the whole event concerning the possessed with insanity, and the swine.

The great cures, the mighty works, and the fame of the miracles, which the blessed Jesus had wrought among men, were, no doubt, become the general topics of conversation, and were spread abroad through all the countries wherever he passed: such wonderful transactions made multitudes desirous of seeing Jesus, and brought these men in great fear to meet him, being terrified with the apprehension that Jesus would come and cure them of their exceeding fierce and raging madness, by binding them with chains and fetters, or by other tortures commonly used, to restrain them from their fierceness and madness injuring others; yet nevertheless could not by any such means be brought to a right mind, or be tamed by any man. On account of some such former severe usage from men, we may imagine the men so cried out, ver. 29. saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" 30. And there was a good way off from them an herd of many

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swine

swine feeding. 31. So the devils [or those possessed with madness] besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, [i. e. out of the tombs, from our haunts among the hollow rocks and caves, where they laid the dead in those times and countries,] suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. 32. And he said unto them, Go. And when they [the men, I say, and not the devils; because our blessed Saviour, according to his usual and known goodness, never denied men their requests—not to any one we read of! nor did he grant the devils so great a favour, and so inconsistent with the honour and dignity of his divine nature, united with humanity. Let them who are subject to such vain and foolish imaginations, support the horrid thought, if they can!] were come out [of their usual retreats and caverns,] they went into the herd of swine: and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters." Now, to obviate all objections against what I remark on this story; Two (suppose, fierce and raging) fellows, falling furiously upon an herd of ever so many swine, may set them easily adrift into sad disorder, running full speed, and where there was a plain and open declivity, to follow one another with full force, so as precipitately to fall headlong into the waters; and

and there being no place of ascent to be gained, they must perish in the sea or lake they fell into. And as to the loss of the swine, it happened through men who were out of their wits, distracted with madness, and therefore no compensation could be expected: now, the miracle in healing of these men, succeeding immediately afterwards, as it really did, will appear much greater and more beneficial to the world; besides, making a perfect cure, and delivering those men from their spiritual torments and bodily infirmities, was of infinitely more value in the sight of God and with the Saviour of men, than ten times the worth of so many swine. Ask our Saviour's question, Are ye not much better than they? And therefore, it is plain upon the whole, it will manifestly appear, - upon serious observation, it was not the devils fell down and worshipped him, but the men. It was not the devils made use of men's mouths to speak and talk with Jesus; for we never read or were told in any history, that the devils ever made use of the tongues and mouths of men to speak and talk with; nor were the devils within the man, (as some conceive.) Is it possible, can any one think, for them to discourse and argue without the organs of speech, necessary to convey words and sounds to one another? Nor was it the devils besought

him much, that he would not send them out of the country; for that would have been one of the most transcendent acts of divine mercy, power, and goodness, in Jesus Christ, to have commanded them for ever to their proper habitations in hell, from doing further mischiefs to mankind by their cruelty and malice.

Again, we may observe Mark v. 10. "And he besought him much, [that is, not the devil, but one of the men who were disordered,] that he would not send them away out of the country." Now, whether there were not more than two such disorderly fellows here, is not material; for it seems they had a great liking to that solitary place of retreat, among the tombs and monumental caves, serving best to their irrational and wild purposes. See ver. 12. "And all the devils [or disordered persons] besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them," i. e. among the herd, or into the herd. Nor is it rational to think, the devils, who are spiritual and angelical beings, would petition to prostitute their natures so far, as to enter into such brutish and filthy creatures as swine are esteemed: nor can it be supposed, they would enter into swine, out of regard to the laws of God, who prohibited the Jews the eating of swine's

swine's flesh. Nor was it the devils who requested in St. Luke viii. 31. "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep;" because, if they entered into the swine, we find they all ran into the deep lake, and so perished in the water. Now, the evangelical history leaveth us in the dark, how the devils escaped, or what became of them: but we are informed of the disordered person, what befel him, after the herd ran violently away into the lake, and were choked; continuing the story, that "They who fed them, went and told it in the city and in the country. And they came to Jesus, and found the man out of whom the devils [i. e. the disorders] were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid."—As well they might be, to see him thus miraculously cured of his raving, distracted fits, without being confined within walls, or restrained by chains and fetters; though altogether incurable from madness and mischief, by any other restorative medicines; and yet without any tortures or forcible means, was restored to a perfect use of his reason and natural faculties, only by the mere word and command of Christ. Now here we have a full, exact history of the miracle: but taking these tropes of the Evangelists in a different sense, fills the whole transaction

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full of insuperable difficulties; and besides, it would be unpardonable in any historians to conceal so material and interesting a part of the story, as not to inform their readers, what became of the devils; a circumstance of this kind being omitted, will make the whole appear to be a very lame account, which ought certainly to have completed the relation. And if men would give themselves leisure to consider well, and be rightly informed, there were no devils in the case: but the Evangelists, to add greater elegance and dignity to their writings, make use of such beautiful tropes and figures, as are common with the best and most learned authors: thus, by an usual figure in Rhetoric, called *Prósopopœia*, they more emphatically introduce the devils as speaking in the persons of men.

Another point I cannot avoid taking notice of, in this transaction related by St. Luke, who, the more to heighten our admiration, under an elegant Hyperbole, and with great propriety, represents the devils as making a formal procession from the man, and immediately entering into the swine; Ver. 33. "Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine." There is a continuation of several metaphors through the discourse, apparent in these Evangelists; which

which tropes certainly require a great allowance of explanation, because they exceed, in strictness of truth, the thing represented. Nor must we wonder, that the same rhetorical and figurative manner of expression is used by the several Evangelists; since the Holy Spirit of all truth was the sole director of the matter, and guide of their pens.

But I return to my former point:—I was induced to set about this critical part of explaining the true nature of grace, or the divine assistance; to rectify the mistaken and inconsistent notions of mankind about the inward operations of God's Holy Spirit; to stop the prevailing progress and torrent of enthusiasm; and to satisfy some Divines with whom I conversed: moreover, being prompted thereto on many other accounts, I offer here my own free sentiments.

First, I think myself in duty bound to give all due honour and glory to the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God, for all the means of salvation offered to fallen man, through Jesus Christ; to think and speak honourably and reverently (according to the best of my understanding and knowledge) of every thing relating to God, and his dealings with men. Hence I am
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led to affirm, that Almighty God always dispenses his gifts and favours according to the order and nature of things; for he wisely foresees the several contingencies of natural objects, as well as spiritual, and their several effects. He never puts himself to the trouble of doing any thing extraordinary, above the power of nature, but when he sees it absolutely necessary for the benefit of the creature, and not to be done without his divine interposition: and where he hath afforded natural means sufficient to answer all the wise ends of his divine dispensations towards us, it must appear inconsistent and absurd, to expect supernatural operations.

To prove this, it is plain, and allowed by all Christians, that Almighty God hath made a perfect and sufficient revelation of his will to mankind in the Gospel, by Jesus Christ; and his sending the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, to lead them into all truth, and to inspire them to write down all things needful for the Church of Christ, through all ages and nations of the world. And I beg you will observe this, first, as an universal truth, and I do insist on, to be the common and ordinary means used by the Spirit of God; I speak of the written word, including the ministry and sacraments; these are the external

ternal instrumental means designed by Almighty God for the benefit and salvation of man.

Again, observe this necessary distinction—2dly, All the internal effusions, operations, motions, and gifts of God's Holy Spirit upon the souls of men, without external means: I shall insist upon them to be extraordinary and supernatural; and therefore not to be prayed for, or taught as necessary, where the natural and ordinary means are abundantly sufficient to answer the designs of God, in promoting our true interest and glory.

It is indeed certain, many very learned and pious Divines have been so far prejudiced thro' education, common custom, and reading the generally-received tracts of divinity, that they have entirely misinformed and bewildered themselves and others, concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit of God, the internal impulses and secret motions in the souls of men; so many have treated on this subject, that the inward workings of the Spirit is become a point of serious belief with some, they having been long trained up under clouded and mistaken notions of this kind, mere senseless imaginations. To do some real service to the cause of truth and religion, I presume I can offer nothing more useful and acceptable, than to

favour the public with a sacred and more intelligible account of God's dealing with his people; how unpolished soever, for want of conveniences and other opportunities, to render it more delicious to polite and learned judges: but whatever may be deficient in these points, I have made out with the greatest plainness and sincerity; which no author has ever done on this subject, running into a false extreme, being neither able to edify or convince others, by what means, or in what measures, the internal impulses or operations are effected; nor indeed have they ever been able to discern within themselves those pretended divine impulses, singular influences and directions of God's Holy Spirit, from those sudden effusions, secret motions, or internal operations of their own minds: and concerning this, they truly acknowledge themselves to be in the dark, and to be utterly ignorant about these mysterious operations; as they must needs be, where there is no such thing in reality; and so far they are grossly imposed on, being insensibly led after an *ignis fatuus* of their own starting, this mystical knowledge having been too long taken upon trust, few giving themselves the trouble seriously to consider and to examine into the true merits of the cause: and how should it be otherwise, when they follow

low a clue of vain traditions, which exceed the bounds of reason and revelation?

For want of the preceding necessary and natural distinction, it follows, that a great part of Christians are vainly tossed about with every wind of doctrine, or are senselessly inflamed with an impious spirit of Enthusiasm; neither considering or knowing, whether there be any truth in what they affirm or teach: For instance—They who affirm, that Faith is the gift of God, in such a sense as to imagine, that it cannot be had, without a secret impulse or inward operation of the Spirit of God, are as absurd and contradictory to St. Paul as possible, who assigns a natural and external cause how it is wrought in us, Rom. x. 17. and quotes it from another Scripture, see Isa. liii. 1. which is confirmed also by St. John xii. 38. That faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and this is the true means whereby all our souls are enlightened.

For the right understanding of Scripture, take this key in one instance more, which shall serve for all others: Philip. ii. 13. St. Paul says, “For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure:” that is, He worketh

the grace and assistance of his Holy Spirit by natural and external means, by the word, the ministry, and the sacraments; and not by any divine impulse, internal or secret inspiration on the soul, without means; for that is both contrary to reason and the express words of the Holy Spirit, which saith in the foregoing verse, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." And reason tells you, that if God worketh in you both to will and to do internally, without means, then it is no more you that work out your own salvation, but God. Wherefore, I assert this to be a true interpretation and standard sense, agreeable to reason and Scripture. From hence I am led to affirm, that God worketh in us the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit, by natural and external means: such, I say, are the word, the ministry, and the sacraments, the common and ordinary methods God hath ordained, and put in every one's power to use, (if they please to listen to those means,) for the salvation of mankind.

And further, I deny the necessity of God's working in our souls, by the internal operations, secret influences, or divine impulses of his Holy Spirit; for these I affirm to be extraordinary gifts and supernatural effects of his blessed inspiration on the souls of men, without natural means;

means; and therefore extraordinary, which he vouchsafed only to the Apostles, and some peculiarly gifted Christians under their directions, in the exigencies of the Primitive Church. And I judge, nothing can be more absurd, and bordering upon blasphemy, than to talk of Gifted Brethren, of the indwelling and inbreathing of the Holy Spirit of God, of *extempore* teaching and praying by the pure effusion, influence, or operation of God's Holy Spirit; because nothing can be more false, in fact, or contradictory to the Holy Spirit of all truth; or indeed to talk in that random manner, against all experience, that no one can benefit by revelation, or understand Scripture, without the Spirit; which is a senseless imagination, and as stupid as to say, God hath made a revelation which no body can know or understand, unless he is pleased to reveal it by his Spirit, i. e. a revelation in all effects equal to no revelation. How inconsistent and contradictory does this appear! A revelation unintelligible, of no meaning or signification, being not in the power of our own reason and faculties to understand it; or being so understood, we are unable to practise it, according to these men, without the Spirit. But I cannot reflect on this great abuse without horror. I am sorry, men who pretend to reason should be guilty of such absurd
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and monstrous opinions. For why are we commanded to search the Scriptures, to believe and practise the word of God, if no one can ever be able to do it, without the inward operations or teaching of the Spirit? Then, as the Quakers suggest, the Scriptures would indeed be no more than a Dead Letter. But St. Paul assures us of the contrary, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. And again, "The word of God is quick and powerful." Heb. iv. 12. The Apostle expressly says, the *Scripture*, the *Word*, which is an assured, sufficient proof, that the Spirit hath not the least work or share in effecting these purposes. It cannot be doubted, that the source of these mischiefs has always risen from wrong expositions of Scripture; and nothing can be more certain, that as the sacred writings are allegorized and interpreted by the Teachers of the Spirit, they become the spiritual firebrands and incendiaries of all Enthusiasm. Now, thus laying open all such dangerous doctrines, by this useful Treatise, this natural Key of Knowledge, the Scriptures are rendered perfectly agreeable to reason and the nature of things, consistent with
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God and his dealing with men, and what God intended they should be, A Spiritual Help to our infirmities.

That God worketh on our souls by external and natural means, such as are said above, the word, the ministry, and the sacraments, the common and ordinary means God hath appointed for the instruction, comfort, and salvation of mankind; and therefore the internal impulses, the divine operations and influences of the Holy Spirit of God, are not now at all necessary, being extraordinary, supernatural: and God having thought fit to withdraw those powerful influences of his Spirit from the Church, if not in the time of the Apostles, when the Canon of the New Testament was completed by St. John, yet immediately upon their expiration. Now, where there is not the least appearance of any certain proof, or positive assurance for the truth of the matter pretended, it must be esteemed by all considering persons as a groundless conceit; nay, it appears absurd and inconsistent in the highest degree, to talk of spiritual effusions and divine inward teachings, which differ nothing from the sudden motions and operations of the mind; which cannot be sensibly or reasonably discerned from the common and ordinary powers of the soul, in the use
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of its natural faculties; and which cannot in any wise be proved, by fact or experience, to proceed from God. This alone, duly considered, is sufficient to silence all the deluded teachers and followers of Methodism, may astonish and put them all to their—*ne plus ultra*, from boasting of the Spirit.

These my sentiments concerning the divine assistance necessary to produce inward holiness, are as clear and demonstrable as the word of God and experience can make them. Let men of sense and understanding debate them as much as they please, the more they will elucidate truth, and beget conviction; and moreover, will shew, that there are no bad qualities in the human heart, acted with earnest endeavours to remove errors, and to promote truth; which is all I aim at. Though I seem to differ, as I have been told, from St. Austin, and many other men of learning, I am nevertheless desirous to put my assertions to the public test of Scripture and reason: and, if I may be allowed to speak for myself, my sentiments tend more to the honour of God, as consistent with his attributes, to the promotion of true religion, to give due weight and authority to the sacred writings, to the ministry, to the sacraments, and to all the other natural
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means of grace, which God hath ordained ; much more than those extraordinary motions of the inward teaching, the instantaneous operations or immediate impulses of the Spirit of God, supposed by some, most frequent on human minds. Hence they pretend to divine knowledge, to spiritual convictions, and wonderful communications with God ; which I shall demonstrate to be false and impious, inconsistent with God's gracious dealing with mankind, and the liberty of the human will ; contradictory to the whole tenor of Scripture ; destructive of all true religion ; subversive of the divine efficacy of the ministry, the sacraments, and all the other common and ordinary means of grace and true holiness. For who could ever propose to himself to read, to hear, or to meditate on, the word of God ; who would ever attend to the use of the ministry, the sacraments, or any other means of assisting grace ; who is strongly possessed, that godliness, or inward holiness, can never be obtained or effected, without the internal impulses, the powerful motions and operations, of the Holy Spirit in the soul ? Were this true, in fact, there would soon be an end put to all religion, in the use of means, and to all the benefits of revelation.

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But, supposing these extraordinary notions of the internal impulses, the powerful motions and operations, of the Holy Spirit in the soul, to be true, what would the consequences be? Why, we plainly see—They who seem confident to have this inward teaching and assistance, how highly conceited, how unchristian-like and proud they are, in their own opinions, of their great worth and holiness; as if they were God's peculiar favourites, were freed from sin, and were assured of their salvation! And how uncharitable, to despise others, (perhaps much better than themselves,) as enemies to God and goodness! Others we see, who cannot assure themselves of this inward assistance and help of the Spirit, how melancholy, dejected, and desponding they are; ready to accuse our good God of injustice, severity, want of love, mercy, and goodness to them; murmuring and complaining against his dispensations, and ready to abandon themselves to all sin and wickedness, or make away with themselves!

To these wild and extravagant notions, it is, in a great measure, that all our present unhappinesses, distractions, and disturbances in religion, owe their rise and continuance among us. This

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is the Quaker's great confidence, that he can gain heaven by his *inward light*, without the helps of religion; and, what is most absurd, by denying and rejecting the very essentials of Christianity. How can we ever expect the Church to flourish in peace and unity, but by fixing religion on its true basis, by making use of all those external means and aids God hath vouchsafed in the Gospel; which are abundantly sufficient to procure our happiness and salvation; and which, by our neglecting to use, we shall undoubtedly be the poorer in grace, in goodness, and all true holiness, and deservedly increase our condemnation, here and hereafter? How soon might we hope to see this blessed change, by firmly adhering to the written word, by entirely discarding all those dangerous and false notions of the inward immediate operations of the Holy Spirit, so apparently pernicious to the souls of men, and ruinous to true religion!

To prove the truth of these my assertions, That inward holiness is not produced by instantaneous influences, secret or internal operations of the Spirit of God in the soul, let us strictly examine and view, how any change to holiness, or amendment of principles, hath been wrought in men; first, from the Old Testament, when

inspirations were frequent, and God seemed particularly familiar with men, in revealing himself to his people as he saw it needful for their several exigencies. Two remarkable instances we have of this kind, which may serve to illustrate the points I am contending for: King David, an inspired person, and a man after God's own heart, as the Holy Spirit testifieth; when special revelations were frequent to him as well as others, notwithstanding, when he had grievously sinned against the Lord, in the matter of Uriah, you will find, God did not work upon him internally, by any secret impulses or immediate operations of his Holy Spirit; which would probably have been the most speedy, successful, and unexceptionable proceeding, by instantaneously moving the understanding, and regulating the will, so as it could not act against the divine impulses: this, it seems, was not God's method; but he sends Nathan, the prophet, to rebuke the wickedness of the king. Here, it is true, the king might have fallen into a rage, and resented this freedom of the prophet; he might have resisted the strongest evidences of sense, and turned his passion against all conviction. God, you see, made use of external methods, which left the man entirely to himself and the use of his own reason, as the most natural means; and these alone brought
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the monarch to a thorough sense of his sins, and to as speedy a repentance. This act was effected (as the word of God doth assure us) by no internal operations or impulses of the Holy Spirit. Now, could any one imagine, this amendment might have been properly and more significantly wrought, by the inward motions of the Holy Spirit, had Almighty God thus dealt with man, especially on so great a Sovereign, a man after God's own heart; rather than by exposing a Favourite and Prince to the reproof of a subject, though a prophet; God would certainly have done it: but there is nothing of this sort to help out the imagination.

Observe, in the next place, the account given of Manasseh, 1 Chron. xxiii. 9. who made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the Heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel: yet the Lord did not effect his reformation and return by any secret, internal motions of the Holy Spirit in his soul; but the Lord brought upon his people, the host of the King of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him away to Babylon, and there left him to his own disposition under captivity. Thus the Holy Spirit assures us: and
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when he was in affliction, (those his external pressures and troubles so wrought upon his wicked heart, as to effect his amendment and reformation,) "He besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." Here you have two as different characters thus wrought upon, as you can imagine. Should you want any more evidences, you may take all the instances of the Old Testament; where you may plainly discern, how God deals with mankind by external means, and never by inward teachings, impulses, or instantaneous operations; nothing of this internal kind of work, but what most properly belongs to immediate inspiration. And thus Almighty God frequently declares, how he deals with his people, by raising up prophets, rising up early and sending them, to call them to repentance and holiness.

The same we shall find through the whole course of the New Testament; nothing but demonstrable proofs, that Almighty God worketh faith, conversion, and repentance, whatsoever holiness of life, by external means, as most consistent with his attributes and the nature of things. Both Jews and Gentiles, who were converted to the faith of Christianity, were wrought upon by the preaching and miracles of Christ and his Apostles;

Apostles ; by no internal means, we are assured by St. Paul—which he proves in Rom. x. 14, &c. “How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed ? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear, without a preacher ?” All which questions imply a strong negation of any other means ; that the calling upon the Lord, saving faith, and holiness of spirit, are absolutely impossible, without these necessary helps. The Apostles themselves had all the external and natural means of conviction necessary to confirm them in the truth and reality of our blessed Lord’s resurrection. St. Peter, on the denial of his Lord and Master, was brought to a sense of his guilt by the crowing of a cock, which put him in remembrance of what Jesus had told him ; and when he thought thereon, he wept. Here is not so much as the least impulse, or inward work of the Holy Spirit ; but a mere act of the human mind, in the conversion of so great an Apostle. So long as man is a rational, free agent, it is absolutely necessary, that the human understanding and will should freely act and chuse for itself, in matters of faith, conversion, and obedience : every wise and thoughtful man desires to improve in these duties to the greatest perfection he is capable of, because he perceives it is best for him.

so

so to do; but one who is given up to indulge himself in his lusts and passions, will oft-times resist these natural means, and be as vicious as he pleases, because he can chuse both to will and to act for himself. That these acts are natural and necessary, else it would be in vain to call upon rational beings to believe and to repent: but if the Spirit of God must be sent to effect these, it would be absolutely needless and vain—no one can resist his inward immediate power and grace: whereas we know, men can, and do resist, the ordinary means of grace.

That Jews and Gentiles embraced the faith, on hearing and seeing the truths of the Christian doctrines confirmed by the ministry and miracles of the Apostles, is undeniable; and what greater testimony need there be to prove it, than three thousand witnesses, converted by St. Peter's sermon? Acts chap. ii. Again, Acts iv. 4. it is said, "Howbeit, many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." Witnesses abundantly sufficient! But some may say, The Spirit went along with their preaching, to render it effectual. Pray, what Spirit do they mean? The Holy Spirit of God? There is no such thing intimated—no internal motions, no inward teachings;
and

and therefore there can be no truth in what they say. For, if the Holy Spirit of God attended to work internally on the minds of all that heard their preaching, it could not fail to be so instrumental, as not to be in the will or power of man to resist it; for any one, by resisting the Holy Spirit, as effectually resisteth faith, conversion, obedience, &c. Besides, he must no longer be a free agent to act for himself, being moved or acted upon by a superior power; it could not, then, be the act of the man. And moreover, the Holy Spirit would never have assured us, "Many of them which *heard* the word, believed;" but would have truly informed us, *Many which were inwardly taught and moved by the Spirit, believed.* Plainer evidence there can be none! And above all, Saul's miraculous conversion was by external means only.—See Acts ix.

Let us next examine Acts xvi. 14. because great stress is laid on this text: "Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, which worshipped God, heard us, *whose heart the Lord opened.*" Now, some who have fondly embraced the inward motions of the Holy Spirit, may imagine, the Lord Christ, or God, through the Spirit, opened her heart by secret internal operations, immediate impulses

and motions. A person of small discernment or understanding may discover, that these words are not so to be interpreted; but, that through the preachings and signs which the Apostles wrought, hearing and seeing them, her heart was moved to attend to those things which were spoken of Paul. The damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, could easily discern as much, by only hearing and seeing the Apostles but a little while; having but just followed and been with them, she could say, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. Again, the keeper of the prison, who was converted by Paul and Silas, after the terror of the earthquake, and fearing his prisoners were escaped, was prevented by St. Paul (in a most noble and Christian-like manner) from killing himself; and knowing, as well he might, without the inward impulses of the Spirit, that these things happened on account of his new prisoners, he called for a light, and came in trembling before them, and falling down before Paul and Silas, he brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Supposing he had the inward teaching of the Spirit to enlighten him, he would never have asked the question.)

Now,

Now, some of our new Lights (Apostles they cannot be, but Apostates they are, who depart from the truth) would have said, Seek for inward teaching, which gives divine faith; you must have the internal convictions and operations of the Holy Spirit, or you will perish everlastingly. Horrid, impious doctrine! But learn from what the true Apostles said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house, who believed, and were all baptized straightway." Ver. 33. Will any one contend, this was the inward teaching or work of the Spirit? This, being the universal and constant testimony of Scripture, I hope, is sufficient to convince all mankind, that the assistance or grace of God is wrought in our minds by external means; and that the inward holiness or operations in our minds, may be fairly made clear (to every one who is not prejudiced in a high degree) to proceed from thence only. Now, seeing that in those miraculous and inspired ages of the world, Almighty God was pleased to dispense faith, repentance, and holiness, by no other means, not even to David, Manasseh, or the primitive Christians in the times of the Apostles;

it is the greatest presumption and wickedness for any, to pretend, under the clear revelations of the Gospel, that mankind cannot be instructed and saved, without greater degrees of illumination, and the more immediate impulses of the Holy Spirit.

The inspiration of the Apostles, and penning the holy Scriptures, was a wonderful scheme and contrivance for the benefit of all ages of the Christian world; and nothing more seems to be required on our parts, but to believe the truths revealed, to lead our lives in sincere obedience to that will of God, and whereinsoever we fail, truly to repent: all this is readily allowed to be easy and practicable, according to the present order and nature of things; and therefore it is vain and senseless to seek for inward teaching, or other aids of the Spirit, to effect these; such a mere string of conceited notions, as are to be met with in the writings of Mr. W—l—y, and the like Illuminated Authors, have abundantly more distracted the reason, and confounded the understanding of mankind in the way of godliness, than done any real service or honour to the cause of religion and virtue. All this is too visible, (from the many unhappy disturbances that have

have been made by these enthusiastic teachers in many parts of this kingdom) is too notorious.

But once more, concerning the internal immediate teaching and impulse of the Holy Spirit in the soul, supposing such divine impulses to be at all necessary : I say then, the soul, being under the most divine, infallible, and powerful impulses, cannot act by its own proper powers and faculties ; but must be wholly aided, guided, and determined, in its understanding, will, and every capacity, to perform the divine operations of the Spirit ; otherwise this inward teaching is a mere empty sound, of no avail : for under its blessed influence and suggestions, the soul does not conceive its own thoughts ; and consequently, as they are the springs of all motion, it cannot be the author of any actions, but what are suggested by the Spirit. Now give me leave to illustrate this by undeniable proofs : The prophet Baalam says, Numb. xxii. 18. “ If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.” And though the prophet used the most approved means, to move God to grant Balak’s desire, by building altars, and offering burnt-offerings and sacrifices on every altar, yet still Baalam was over-ruled ; as you may read the story,

Numb.

Numb. chap. xxiii. "Told I not thee, saying,
All that the Lord speaketh, that must I do."

Ver. 26. And when God inspireth the prophets,
they speak the very words of the Spirit, as
they frequently declare, "Thus saith the Lord."

Ezek. ii. 4. "I do send thee unto them, and thou
shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God."

Ver. 7. And thou shalt speak my words unto
them, whether they will hear," &c. Hence it is

plain, that it is not in the power of a person in-
wardly taught, to do his own will; nay, not to
will his own thoughts, or speak his own mind:

and therefore the Holy Spirit of God cannot be
resisted; and if these inward motions of the Spi-

rit are not to be resisted, then is a man under
this inward teaching no longer himself—no more

a man properly a free agent; because he is over-
ruled in the use of his own will and faculties.

And this, as far as I can find in Scripture, was
always the case, when men were taught by the

Spirit of God; whether by visions, or dreams,
or voices, or inspiration, they were governed and

guided by the Spirit: and I conceive, all men
must know and discern the impulses of the Holy

Spirit, from the motions of their own minds, as
easily and naturally, as they can distinguish their

own thoughts from the words or voice of another
person which speaks to them. "God's thoughts

are

are not like our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways; neither is he like to men who are given to change; but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Isa. xl. 8. How inconsistent is it for God, to send his Spirit, and to act by his Spirit, in our souls, but in vain and to no purpose! For, according to the absurd notions of those who allow the inward motions and impulses of the Spirit, they more absurdly and inconsistently allow, those impulses often may be, and are, resisted by men; which is charging God very foolishly, if not blasphemously, to think he doth act in vain, that the will of man shall take place before his will, both in resisting and rejecting his immediate impulses: if this be the case, men deal with God as they please, and not he with them as he pleaseth. The truth is, and we know it by experience, that God hath given us the ordinary, natural means of grace, and we may use, or neglect to use them, as we please; because he hath left us, in that respect, to the power and reason of our own wills: but he cannot send or give his Spirit, to be thus immediately resisted and abused by men; for that is not only an indignity, but argues an impotency in God, both in will and power, to deal with men: and sure he never will, nay, he cannot suffer, such weak, impotent creatures, immediately so to affront and controul
his

his Spirit, to counteract his instantaneous operations. This shews how contradictory and absurd these notions of the immediate impulses and inward teaching of the Spirit must appear.

A great many learned authors have shewn themselves to be very much in the dark, nay, to be very wrong, when they treat of the inward aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit: but it is not my present business to interfere with them; it is enough for me to say, this Treatise will ascertain the natural and true causes of inward grace and holiness mediately, and not from the immediate power of the Holy Spirit in our souls; it will remove those errors and prejudices, in regard to the inward teaching of the Spirit; it will set those points of knowledge in a much plainer light, on a more certain foundation; and will strike up the very roots of all Enthusiasm, which proceed from those spiritual delusions, those wrong, most vain pretences to the Holy Spirit. How far I am from being opinionative, or falling into error on the opposite side of the debate, let the public candidly determine.

I do not exclude the Holy Spirit of God, if he sees good, by extraordinary means, from governing and guiding the Church of Christ; but
only

only prove to you, that here we can never fail of his assistance and direction in a more natural way, if we sincerely make use of his external means of grace: on this rock I build my persuasion, which, I presume, must be of the utmost service to the cause of truth and religion; because, all that I have advanced hereon, or indeed can be said, is perfectly agreeable to Scripture, to reason, and the nature of things; deriving the aids and assistances of God's grace in our souls, from the ordinary and common means which Almighty God hath graciously indulged to us, in the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ; which every individual person hath an indispensable right and claim to, and a natural power to use to his eternal advantage, who looks for salvation through the Lord, our Saviour: this revelation and will of God being freely made known to us by the precepts and doctrine of Christ himself, enforced by his own example, and by inspired persons, who had a capacity and power to reveal things in an extraordinary manner to others; which divine assistance and revelation, appearing consistent with the goodness of God, the reason of man, and the eternal relation of things, thus recommended and confirmed as the infallible truth and word of God, attested both with signs and wonders above the power of nature, and having that

intrinſical worth and excellency above all the directions of finite reaſon, being of infinite importance for the good of mankind, needeth no further advantages, than barely to be propounded to our underſtandings; and, meeting there with that due reception juſtly becoming divine truths, ſweetly and rationally determineth the will to chuſe what the underſtanding perceiveth clearly to be excellent, juſt, and good. Hence there cannot appear, that the leaſt compulſion or reſtraint whatſoever is laid upon us, as moral and free agents, capable of doing good or evil: but where there is an immediate acting or impuſe, an inward teaching of the Holy Spirit in the ſoul, it muſt be far otherwiſe; there the ſoul muſt be under a neceſſity of receiving the impreſſions, without making uſe of its own faculties; and conſequently, ſo far as its own operations are excluded, ſo far it is deprived of ability to reaſon and to act for itſelf: but being inſtructed by the principles of revelation, the ſoul is under no neceſſity to receive the directions of the Spirit; but what it hath firſt of all, a natural and free power to deliberate, to argue, and reaſon upon, to will and chuſe for itſelf; and this is the moſt rational and conſiſtent manner of God's dealing with mankind.

Well,

Well, then, granting the Holy Spirit of God doth sufficiently acquaint us of our duty, and of all necessary means for our happiness and salvation, be it by the mouth or pen of an inspired Apostle, is not this much more consistent with the nature of man, much more agreeable with reason, and the nature of God's dealing with us, and so, much the more effectual to all Christians, than any inward teachings or impulses of the Spirit, that men can in any wise now pretend to, which, on due consideration, appear utterly inconsistent, groundless, and false? Again, hath not Almighty God fully made such a discovery of all things needful for us to know, hath taught us faith, and every other qualification, to fit us for his favour, and our eternal happiness; hath perfectly instructed us in the importance of those great duties of repentance and obedience, by the Gospel, that is, hath granted us the grace of faith, repentance, and obedience; hath taught us how to demean ourselves in all holiness of conversation and living; hath bountifully assisted, encouraged us, in the use of these means, by his holy word, propounding to us the immortal rewards of endless felicity and glory, if we persevere in well-doing to the end of our lives? In this sense it is, we are all taught of God, because we are

instructed by the word and Gospel of Jesus Christ, God and Man ; and therefore it is the greatest absurdity and contradiction, to say, we must be possessed of these gracious assistances, no otherwise, than by the immediate inward impulses of the Spirit.

View this in another light—Can you be really assured of this inward teaching, these divine motions of the Spirit, to guide men ? We know, they may seek this gift, and pray for it most fervently ; they may smite upon their breasts, as if they would by that means beat it in ; be under the strangest convulsions and pretended convictions, as is frequent with the Methodists, and yet not receive it at their own instances : for God bestows the Spirit, not as an ordinary favour, and therefore is granted to very few, only those in whom he most delighteth, and in the manner he pleaseth ; but to ungodly and wicked men he communicateth not this gift of the Spirit ; for it is said, “ God heareth not sinners,” and, “ What concord hath Christ with Belial ?” Observe then, while sinners, they are not in a capacity or condition to receive this gracious gift of the Holy Spirit : but we are all sinners ; and without his inward teaching and motions, no one can ever have

have the gift or power to repent! Behold! were the opinions of these men true, there is as great a stumbling-block and rock of offence, officiously put in the way of man's salvation, as can possibly be devised; but wo unto that man, by whom the offence cometh! If the inward teaching be the only means of salvation, then Christ appeared, and the Apostles taught, in vain! What high encomiums and excellent things have been spoke of this inward gift of the Spirit, I am not much concerned about; as being no proof of its internal operations and real impulses, no more than they are a proof of the bold adventures of Don Quixote.

But let it be observed, I maintain the power of grace and the divine assistance, in its true and genuine operations, which appear most consistent with the honour of God, with his adorable perfections, and the truth of his holy word. As to all the fundamental points of faith and good works, I attribute the whole to God, (without whom we can do nothing, because in him we live, and move, and have our being. As to all the means of grace and hopes of glory, I devoutly acknowledge, they are derived to us by divine revelation. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Life and immortality are brought to light

light through the Gospel." And as to all religious thoughts, evangelical holiness, or spiritual excellencies, they are naturally produced in us, by means of God's word, the ministry, the sacraments, and other outward helps, such as our senses, our own natural reason and understandings, do impart to us. For instance—Seeing and observing the good examples of others, or their misfortunes, we are naturally led to grow cautious, wise, and thoughtful. *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.* What can be more plain? By exhortations, reproofs, instructions, and various other methods, God acteth upon the minds of men in such a natural way, as is consistent with their liberty, and agreeable to their reason; and consequently, not by any internal operations of his Holy Spirit. Nay, all those spiritual and holy excellencies, which the Apostle, Gal. v. 22. calls "the fruit of the Spirit," love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and such like, are all virtually wrought in us, by those external ordinary acts of his free grace and bounty, in the use of all those means revealed to us in the Gospel: as St. Paul assures Timothy, "Thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, *through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*" This was necessary to be added, because
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the Old Testament only pointed out the Messiah; in whom he believed; but here, in the New, we have all the demonstrations possible, for the truth of the Messiah and his doctrines, for the efficacy of his redemption, and all the means of salvation: and if such ordinary means were sufficient for so great a Bishop and Pastor as Timothy, in the first planting of the Church, (I deny not but he had the advantages of Christian knowledge; but here the Apostle speaks of the Old Scripture, the New being not wholly penned,) sure, then, our much more improved knowledge by the whole New Testament, may abundantly suffice for our salvation, without pretending to the inward directions and immediate operations of God's Holy Spirit. As to what former authors have wrote, concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit in our souls, of the grace of his inward impulses and motions, many have been very inconsistent and egregiously wrong: but let that rest. I most earnestly intreat, this may be a means that no Christians henceforward may be led into, or continue in, their mistakes.

It must be highly impious and affronting to the immaculate honour and majesty of God, to charge and impanel his ever blessed and glorious Spirit, to dance attendance to every sudden

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turn and motion of our minds ; to make the Omnipotent God thus vain and inconsistent, compelling his Holy Spirit to do nothing more than what God hath abundantly done for us, by his ordinary means of grace: this is shockingly unbecoming ; it is childishly trifling with that holy Being, who is a consuming fire. All men ought to fear and tremble before so great a God, to act, to speak, and think reverently of that supreme and excellent nature. And though the Scripture seems by some expressions to intimate, that the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of God are given to us Christians ; yet that cannot be in a strict, but secondary sense, primarily to the Apostles inspiring them, and enlightening them to reveal the will of God to all mankind ; and through them we have all necessary divine truths, knowledge, grace and assistance, communicated to the World : again, many places mention the giving of the Holy Spirit, &c. We must observe, they speak in an usual figure, by way of eminence : the greater including the less, as the cause its effects, where the Holy Spirit is put for the gifts and graces thereof : this, being rightly understood and applied, I apprehend there can be no grounds left, no proof for the inward teaching those secret motions and powerfull workings of the Holy Spirit in the minds of men ; there
being

being not one single instance through all the Scriptures, to prove that God used this method; but to men only who were inspired to teach others; This, I presume, is an argument sufficient to convince the understanding of all unprejudiced persons, who are not bigotted to the mistaken notions of that kind, too commonly received.

Besides, it is certain, the Almighty is a God of all order; and to that end hath instituted a settled succession of pastors and teachers, with full power to instruct and guide the people under them: and if God grant this inward teaching promiscuously to men and women of every degree, then he does plainly contradict himself, and overthrows his own settled institution of pastors and teachers, and becomes the author of disorder and confusion. But sure, no rational being can ever suppose, that the all-wise God should grant this inward teaching universally, should act thus inconsistently with himself, in the good order and government of the world, should set aside his own approved institution, and fix upon a wild rabble, who know no order for establishing his Church, and therefore go forth, and are sent, either men or women, to direct and teach others, as Apostles at large. But, be this all a shift and contrivance, or whatever it will, it is

highly impious, nay scandalous, that Mr. W—l—y and others, who pretend to so much good sense and religion, should teach and encourage a practice so contrary to Scripture, and subversive of the Christian institution:—But something must be done, to carry on the cause of Methodism, to give some colour to the Inward Teaching, and other false notions they are labouring to possess the world with; to settle a scheme of Mr. W—l—y's, as weak, as it is wicked. May this rage and madness of the people be stayed, which is founded upon the inward teachings, instantaneous motions, powerful operations, the indwelling, in-breathing of the Holy Spirit, &c. (terms as absurd as unscriptural,) which Enthusiasts say must guide and govern all Christians, or they perish everlastingly! But as such notions are groundless and false, repugnant to the Scriptures, the only true and infallible guides ordained of God for our salvation; so, pressing and teaching those strange doctrines for necessary truths, is doing the work of Anti-christ, and seducing mankind into errors which may end in their eternal ruin. This shews, how little concern they have for truth, and the good of souls; were it not visible also, in that breach it hath made among Christians.

Mr.

Mr. W—y, W—f—d, and others, by preposterously engaging in this disorderly business, are now brought to appease and revile the established Church, to set up independent by themselves; which verifies the words of the divine Apostle, 1 John ii. 18, &c. "Even now are there many Antichrists. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." It seems as if they had carried on their work too far and successfully, to retract, and return to their duty. But it will ever be our great comfort, that these workers of iniquity, and all the powers of darkness, shall never be able to prevail against the true Church of Christ; so let them fall away like water that runneth apace, and when they shoot their arrows, let them be rooted out. Having cleared off this spiritual rust, I am persuaded, there will be no further need of inspiration, or spiritual gifts, during this present state; that the conversion of Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans, will be effected in due time, according to the natural order and course of things; that, as all polite arts and sciences do spread and flourish, by gradual and natural means, so this perfect and

most divine scheme of religion will have its course, and become more universal in the world. What great advantages does it now receive, from the Society for the propagation of the Gospel, from the use of printing, from commerce, and many other natural events, easily discernible! But this will still further appear, if we consider, that Almighty God hath given the world a most perfect and complete revelation of his will, by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, which is effectually sufficient for the happiness and salvation of all mankind, who have ever heard of, and shall embrace, the doctrines of the blessed Gospel. We may now join with the Apostle, Rom. x. 6, 7. "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? [that is, to bring down Christ from above—this salvation by Christ] or who shall descend into the deep, to bring it up from thence? But what saith it? the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart"—that is, the word of faith which we preach. God hath abundantly displayed his infinite wisdom, power, mercy, goodness, and truth, in this great scheme of our redemption, thro' Christ.

Now, what greater comfort and satisfaction can it be to mankind, than to be assured, God is not willing that any should perish; hath done

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all that is necessary, on his part, for man; and that he hath put it entirely into our power, to make ourselves eternally happy, through faith and obedience to the Christian dispensation, if we prove not deficient on our parts, and abuse not these gracious favours of his love and goodness, so freely bestowed upon us? Can any terms be more comfortable, or more consistent with the attributes of God, or tend more to the promotion of true religion? Can any sentiments be more rational, or give greater weight and authority to the sacred writings, than to assert their universal usefulness to salvation, and that they are a sufficient rule of faith and practice to all Christians; that the inward teaching and operations of the Holy Spirit, is a groundless, false conceit, and tendeth to subvert the use of the word, the ministry, and the sacraments, is inconsistent with the manner of God's dealing with men, and all the natural means of grace.

Let the boasting Methodists pretend what they please, to the instantaneous, inward convictions, or conversions, by the Spirit of God; which is more extraordinary and miraculous, than was ever vouchsafed to any man, greater than the conversion of St. Paul, and therefore cannot be credited. Hence their falling down in sudden
 extacies;

extacies; it may be to gain the admiration of others, and procure them more followers, exhibiting strange gestures and convulsions, howling and yelling like devils.

These, good Christian brethren, are the strange and lying wonders of Anti-christ! We may be assured, they are not the finger of God, because contrary to his dealing with mankind in every instance through the Scriptures, against the nature of things, inconsistent with the freedom and liberty of the human will, and all the rational powers of the soul. Wherefore, it doth appear to be every one's duty, to oppose, to abhor, such false doctrines and fantastic delusions, and not to join with them, or fall down to worship the Beast set up by Anti-christ. When they say, "Fall, fall now; why don't you fall? Better to fall now, than to fall into hell," Burwegian's Serm. It seems, as if they were to fall at the word of command, and that the teacher could controul the Holy Spirit to come into his auditors at his pleasure! Admirable religion! not only to distract the minds, but to distort the bodies, of their converts! Blessed conversion, from Christ to Anti-christ! Falling into those horrid, howling fits, is looked upon as a sure seal of their new birth and conversion! 'Tis presumed, they are

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all saints, after this pretended work of the Spirit! Good God! what strange and unaccountable distractions are wrought by these pretended inward workings of the Holy Spirit! Can any thing be more dangerous and false? How irreverently and impiously is the ever-blessed and glorious Spirit sported about, like tennis balls, to serve the brain-sick imaginations of meddling reformers, inconstant and false as their tenets! How miserably has true religion been tortured and overwhelmed by Enthusiasts and Fanatics, in all ages and countries, particularly in England, under the late Usurpation, and is now again threatened, under the directions of our Noted Teachers of Enthusiasm! How many deluded wretches have cut their own throats, have been accessory to their own deaths, by drowning, or hanging themselves, upon the forcible imagination of this inward teaching! as if the Holy Spirit excited them thereto, and suggested, they could do nothing more acceptable to God; or could not expect salvation on any other terms: this hath been assigned, by some, as the cause that they must make away with themselves. How many false doctrines, and enormous, vile practices, have been set on foot in the world, by means of these pretended inward impulses of the Holy Spirit! All which is an argument to me

so full of demonstration, that they are entirely
 inconsistent; groundless, and impious; and that
 there can be no reality in a doctrine of that ex-
 traordinary nature, where all good and truth
 only should be produced: and nevertheless, we
 find on the contrary, there is nothing but mis-
 chiefs, doubts, and mistakes, redounds from
 this inward teaching. How inconsistent is all
 this with the spirit of truth! how opposite to
 Scripture and true religion! What doth more
 tend to set aside the good work of preaching
 and praying by a sound and orderly ministry?
 And indeed, to what purpose or benefit are the
 sacraments, and all other means of grace, to those
 who plead they are thus inwardly taught by the
 Holy Spirit of God? Who is so void of under-
 standing, as not to perceive, that such spiritual
 influences, under the skilful management of Mr.
 W—l-y, attended with all the circumstances of
 prodigy and supernatural efficacy, preached up,
 applauded, and looked on, as a real work of the
 Holy Spirit, should eagerly be embraced, and
 gain many followers; when too many are per-
 suaded to swallow the bait, for truth, which, if
 not counterfeited in the manner they receive the
 Spirit, is rather an act of infernal agency, than
 the work of God; and is much more likely to
 give all considerate persons an utter abhorrence
 and

and dejection to their principles and practices. You may now behold the great Don Wesley, who, like Simon Magus, attempted by his magic to fly up to heaven: behold him again, precipitately to fall down from his lofty castle in the air, with all his spiritual lumber and priestcraft, dashed to the earth; and his horridy (be glann'd!) *burned to atoms.*

But, leaving this pretended ghostly Father, I shall add something more for the satisfaction of the dubious part of my readers, and for the conviction of all gain-sayers: As for the gift of prophecy which men now so frequently pretend to, because they have acquired a habit, by familiar use, to teach *extempore*; when they attribute this kind of exercise to the immediate operation and gift of the Spirit, without giving some undeniable signs and clear evidences of real inward aids, say-so will not do with men of sense; but let them, to convince, shew it by "the demonstration and power of the Spirit;" nothing more may be desired: Again, when men can give no other proof for their being Gifted Brethren, but by praying and teaching *extempore*, this kind of cheat, or lying wonder, hath been so frequently imposed upon the world, that it is an undeniable token, we ought to look upon them as *weak impostors.* As

for the spirit of prophecy, we know it was an immediate extraordinary gift, whereby persons were divinely enlightened themselves, and had ability to reveal things in an extraordinary manner to others: but we know, and are assured, those immediate and extraordinary ways, by which God used to communicate his will unto Jews and Christians, are now laid aside. Seeing now, those extraordinary gifts are vanished, the inspired men are gone; the holy Scriptures, which were written by divine inspiration, are left with us to be the great standard of truth and the rule of our actions. God hath raised up eminent men to open and explain that holy book, and to instruct us in all the great and necessary points of it. We have now a more settled knowledge of religion, and there is a greater progress in Christianity. The oeconomy hath received some alteration, and we need not Extraordinary helps, as, the immediate teaching, and inward aids, of the Spirit; when God plentifully vouchsafeth us those that are Ordinary.

We, under the Gospel, it is true, have greater helps and assistances toward the performing of our duty, than those who lived under the former dispensations had; we have greater light to direct us, we have more effectual means to make

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use of; we have all the revealed knowledge which they had; and we have much more besides.—we have the holy Scriptures of the New Testament, to enlighten, to inform, to instruct us, to check and reprove us, to comfort and support us; we are blessed with the sacred ordinances of Christ's own institution, the sole design of which was, to convey knowledge and grace, strength and establishment, to our souls. God hath set in the Church “some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. To this perfection and fulness, contribute the holy sacraments of Christ's appointment; and we are sanctified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Our Saviour was sent on purpose to be a Guide, a Pattern, and a Rule to mankind; a Guide, to instruct us, by the excellency and transcendency of his precepts—a Pattern, the greatest, noblest, and perfectest in all virtue and righteousness—a Rule and Example, the most eminent and worthy in all goodness and holiness; he was without spot and blemish in his life;

never spoke or did amiss; holy, harmless, and undefiled; he recommended to the world, by his example, the utmost perfection of all graces and virtues which can adorn the Christian life; that men might behold and admire the excellent beauty of holiness and goodness shining in him; he practised what he taught; he admirably commended Christianity to the love, esteem, and veneration of all men;

Being thus taught by the Son of God, and the inspirations given to the blessed Apostles, in all necessary means to salvation, it must appear inconsistent, nay, impious, for Christians to expect any further aids of the Spirit, under the Gospel dispensation; for that would immediately impeach the fountain of all wisdom and goodness of inability, or want of goodness, in not giving mankind a full and direct knowledge of saving truths and effectual means of salvation, by his Son Jesus Christ; and that he did not sufficiently enlighten the blessed Apostles, in sending the Holy Ghost the Comforter to them, to enable them to instruct and convert the world; which is a supposition contrary to Scripture, and the promise of our blessed Saviour to his Apostles, John xiv. 26. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in

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my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Far be such a blasphemous thought from the hearts of all true believers, or for any one to teach, that we have need of the inward aids of that Holy Spirit! far be it from men! for that would be to speak a word against the Holy Ghost, that he did not inspire the holy penmen of the Gospel to commit all things necessary for us to believe and do, in order to salvation; or, in other words, that the Holy Ghost, through them, did not afford us all the necessary means of grace, and that the holy Scriptures are a deficient, imperfect direction, towards the attainment of everlasting salvation: and so it hath ever been the design and practice of disingenuous and wicked men, evermore to disparage and revile the sacred writings, those wells of salvation, and fountains of living waters.

All divine knowledge, divine grace, and divine faith in Christ, proceedeth from the word of God. Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ; and whosoever teacheth any other divine grace or assistance, preacheth another Gospel than that we have received by him and his apostles: that is, The grace of God is no other than the external aids and assistances which Almighty God hath

hath graciously afforded all mankind by the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, which was published and declared to all men; for so Christ himself commanded—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, [i. e. believeth the Gospel,] but he that believeth not, shall be damned." The external preaching of the word or Gospel, is that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and by that means hath marvellously appeared to all men: in this sense it is, that God is no respecter of persons; for high and low, rich and poor, one with another, have all the same means of grace and hopes of glory; and in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him; persons of all ranks and degrees whatsoever, who embrace this word of salvation, who fear God, and live according to the belief of this grace, shall be accepted with him: this is the Divine Grace properly, that bringeth Salvation; and when Scripture is truly expounded, it will appear, there is no other assistance or grace promised or proposed to us, than those external means; no immediate or inward teaching of the Spirit, I do affirm; which can be nothing less than a wicked imagination and vain delusion, is contrary to Scripture, reason, and all experience; and that it plainly is
contrary

contrary to Scripture, may thus be proved, from a remarkable passage, which hath given many persons great occasion to think, there was some immediate, divine, and internal guidance of the Holy Spirit, an inward or preventing grace, and that nothing less could effectually bring us to Christ: John vi. 44. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." Now, to imagine from hence, that there must needs be some immediate, divine, and inward principle of grace instilled into the soul, to conduct men to Christ, is absolutely false, and contrary to the express words of Christ in the next verse, as doth very plainly appear, so as no one can doubt of the manner how they are drawn: Ver. 45. "It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God." And how they are taught by natural and external means only, he plainly demonstrateth to the world: "Every man, therefore, that hath *heard*, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me;" not by any immediate internal grace, but he "that hath *heard and learned* [by his natural senses, out of the law and the Prophets, the great blessings concerning the promised Messiah,] cometh unto me." And St. Paul confirmeth the said doctrine, Gal. iii. 24. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring

bring us unto Christ." Here the holy Scripture is very clear and express against the inward teaching or divine impulses of the Holy Spirit; which many asserters of such a divine grace are vainly puffed up with; but certainly, upon mature deliberation, it must appear a very wild and strange doctrine to all men of learning and sound reason. For, shall this great matter of importance and universal concern to all mankind, in regard to their final state of salvation, or perdition, be set upon such a slender footing, that none can be saved, but only those few who have an inward and immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit? Shall God, who is no respecter of persons, be charged with so great folly and impiety, as to distribute his saving grace in so partial a manner; and damn all the rest of the world? Have we not, rather, the most transcendent cause to praise and glorify his holy Name, for that he hath so graciously provided for the universal benefit and salvation of all mankind, by means of his holy word, the free blessing and privilege of every individual human creature; thus highly commended by the Spirit of Truth itself, that it is able to make men wise unto salvation?

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This inward teaching of the Spirit is indeed point blank against reason, and is also contrary to all experience; for, notwithstanding the strong pretences and boasting of the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, I never met with any one person, who could give any proof or evidence of this inward teaching: and indeed, so far are persons from having any true and undoubted experience of that kind, that they do not pretend to distinguish the inward motions of the Spirit, from the mere suggestions of their own minds; so, without cause, and indiscriminately, they attribute every sudden and good suggestion to be an effusion of the Spirit. Aye, but say others, we sensibly feel and know it by the *extempore* sudden effusions in praying and preaching. Why from thence? There is nothing to be proved, of the internal operations of the Holy Spirit, in those that do so; because many others, that do not pretend to the Spirit at all, can pray and preach *extempore*, as well as those who pretend ever so much to it; which are only acquired habits, and nothing peculiar or extraordinary to a clear and good memory. Nor is any one obliged to credit such pretences, 'till it can be made to appear, that the external aids are insufficient, the Church of Christ cannot be established, nor

the salvation of mankind be effectually promoted, without the immediate inward teaching of the Spirit ; and then, after all, it ought to be fully attested by demonstrable signs, to be no other than the power of God. But, without further trial, one may safely pronounce all such pretences false and injurious, mere imposition and delusion.

Reason and experience both teach us, how our souls may be affected and wrought upon, to vary their operations, by external means only ; and the thing is too notorious : a man is not master of his own thoughts and reasoning for a long time together ; and to talk of the inward conversions and convictions of the Spirit, is very ridiculous : for, supposing you can work upon the passions and affections of mankind, you may easily dispose them to be merry or sad, to laugh or cry, to love or hate, to fear God and abhor sin, to do good or evil, or any thing within the effects of their passions ; and all this, by the mere art of discourse or persuasion. This is an undeniable truth, and so well known, that I am really surprized at the amazing folly and absurdity of our enthusiastic teachers, to talk so inconsistently of the motions and operations of the Holy Spirit, and that all the preaching in the world would signify nothing, unless the Spirit

go along with their teaching, to operate on the soul, and effect a change of heart and principle. An idle notion! so contrary to the truth of things and the attestation of an inspired author, who undoubtedly ascribes the real cause of all such effects, to proceed from the work of teaching; and nothing of that kind, to the secret impulses and motions of the Holy Spirit! Speaking of himself and other Gospel ministers, 2 Cor. v. 11. he saith, "Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men," i. e. Thro' their doctrine and preaching they prevailed with men to believe the Gospel, and to live as becometh Christians; which effectually answers the design and end of preaching, working upon the rational faculties by the most likely and eligible means, by such sensible motives and persuasions as convince the understanding, and attract the will.

A truth, thus supported by reason, experience, and Scripture, is such a forcible argument, as may serve for an eternal confutation of all those strange notions concerning the inward teachings, the instantaneous impulses and motions of the Holy Spirit, in the immediate operations of the heart; as if the soul of man could not deliberate, act, and chuse for itself, without the inward aids of the Spirit: then must the soul be a senseless,

inactive, or at least, a mere passive being ; and so the man, without the natural liberty of being a free agent, and of being unaccountable for his actions ; than which no principle, no thought, can be more senseless, more irrational ! Such is the nature of this new method in the conversion of sinners, that they might as well remain sensible sinners, as become senseless enthusiasts, and fall into the sins of spiritual pride and delusion, and the snare of the devil ; who are taken captive by him, at his will. Now, since there cannot be found in the sacred writings, any one instance or promise of such powerful assistances being given, but to those who were inspired to teach others, I need not be doubtful to affirm, that nothing of that kind has been ever given to men, or known in the world, since the days of the inspired penmen of holy writ ; which, to a rational, considering man, is a demonstration abundantly sufficient to prove all such pretences to be utterly inconsistent, groundless, and false.

Another conclusive argument against the inward aids of the Spirit, may be taken from their own concession, That they may be resisted ; which is absurd : this they must either maintain, or fall into the other gross absurdity, of giving up the liberty of the will. The powerful, immediate

aids

aids of the Holy Spirit must be supposed to be always resistible, such as may be rendered ineffectual by the bare liberty of the will; or the will must be supposed to be over-ruled and controuled by the aids of the Spirit, under its divine operations and convictions: the one or the other must be granted; and the consequence will be, that either the inward aids of the Holy Spirit must be weak and insignificant, no other than a mere pretended chimæra, or the freedom of the human will must be destroyed. Perhaps some one may urge the remarkable instance of the prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 1. who was disobedient to the word of the Lord, as an example, that the inward impulses and motions of the Spirit of God may be resisted, nay, opposed and counteracted by the power and will of man: but may it not be safely affirmed, the prophet had no inward impulses of the Spirit? For it is said, "There came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel." The Son of God, by a clear and human voice, might reveal unto him, and command him, what to say and do on that special embassy; or by vision, or a dream, the usual ways of revelation. But, suppose it an immediate inward impulse of the Spirit, sure, no one in his cool and sober reasonings, can allow that to be resisted; for if any one is thoroughly convinced
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and satisfied in himself, that the Spirit of God inwardly moves, instructs, and guides him, in the doing any particular action, or fulfilling any duty or command; that person can have no manner of doubt or dispute with himself, but that the will or direction of God must take place, as being infinitely wise, infallibly right and good, before all the suggestions of his own shallow reason and weak understanding; so that a person cannot deliberately and voluntarily resist the internal motions of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the inward impulses and motions of the Holy Ghost are so efficacious and operative, above all the natural powers and faculties of the soul; so much superior, in point of light and truth, to all the wit, the reason, and understanding of men; that every one under such a powerful, immediate conviction, can no longer be free to act in contradiction to its divine impressions.

Now, under this argument, it appears to be the greatest absurdity imaginable, to suppose that a Being of infinite power, perfection, and rectitude of nature, should suffer the motions and operations of his holy Spirit to be over-ruled or resisted by the will and power of man: therefore, this can be no instance, that the inward motions of the Holy Ghost in our souls can be resisted;

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nay, it rather seems to be an instance, that external means may sometimes be neglected or over-ruled. The prophet mentioned could not possibly resist the powerful revelation or aid of God's Spirit, which enabled him to foretel future events, and to do things above his natural abilities: all that God thought requisite, the prophet fulfilled; but what depended on his own will and choice, there the Spirit of God left the man to himself; and he willed, to obey the command of God, till another prophet, pretending to a revelation by the word of the Lord, procured his disobedience, and brought him back; but the Scripture says, that "He lied unto him." Now, this is an example and undeniable instance, that Almighty God does sometimes suffer wicked men to assume the character of his prophets, and to speak in his Name, though it be against his authority and truth, without any kind of temporal punishment. (as was shewed to the false deluding prophet;) but most certainly, their punishment is reserved for a more ample and terrible judgment in the world to come; and that he will not suffer the impostures and abuses of his name and authority to go without the most condign punishment. This further shews us, that we should give all due credit to the word of God, and not suffer ourselves to be deceived and imposed

posed upon by the false pretences of men; how plausible and presuming soever they may appear. God cannot contradict himself, and he will not suffer the wit and reason of man to overrule and controul the directions of his Holy Spirit; and this was the ground of the Apostle's plea before the Council—"Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye." Acts iv. 19. Being inspired, they could do no otherways than obey God; and all that the Scriptures mean, by resisting the Holy Ghost, seems to be no more than not hearkening to the voice of inspired men, rejecting those external means which God was pleased to make use of, in revealing his will to mankind, by the mouths of all his holy prophets, or by their pens. This is plain, from Acts vii. 51. "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; [in not hearkening to the voice of the prophets] as your fathers did, so do ye." It can never intend the internal impulses and motions of the Holy Ghost in the souls of men; because it plainly refers to their ears or senses. Besides, we never read of internal aids being given as a common gift to mankind; then it plainly refers to inspired men, to whom they paid no regard, as appears by the words following,

ing, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" &c. I say then, it is morally impossible for the soul, or the will of man, to resist the inward motions and operations of the Holy Spirit; because, the soul being actuated, enlightened, and guided by a superior power, (such is the sovereign will and Spirit of God,) all the created powers and faculties of the soul being of an inferior nature, dependant, and infinitely below the sublime excellency of the divine, incomprehensible Being, must necessarily be subject to act in obedience and subordination to that supreme Power, who gave man all his faculties. The soul of man, though an active, is, nevertheless, a dependant being; and, in regard to the impulses and motions of the Spirit of God, is purely passive: because, it hath no power either to will or chuse, whether it will receive those impressions, or not; nor to resist being guided by them, when received: for if man could do either, he must necessarily be supposed to have a greater power and freedom of acting than the Spirit of God; which is absurd. Every person, therefore, under the powerful impulses and motions of the Holy Spirit, can no more be supposed to act by his own natural will and faculties, but by the direction of God; no more than a person can be said to walk by the light of a

candle, who hath the glaring and full meridian light of the sun to walk by.

Therefore, we ought to be most truly thankful to the God and Father of all Spirits, that we have the voices of the Prophets, the precepts and example of the Son of God, the inspirations of the Holy Ghost given to the Apostles ; by which blessed means we may be made wise unto salvation, if we hearken unto them ; but so sure as we forsake those oracles of truth, and depend upon the fancies and persuasions of men for our direction, so certainly we shall prove disobedient, like the prophet, and become accessory to our own more speedy ruin. This hath been the original source of all the Enthusiasm and Fanaticism that ever raged in the world ; the pest of human society ; the cause of all the divisions, convulsions, and distractions in religion ! What other cause hath ever brought greater revolutions in the Church, more infamous treasons and rebellions in the State, and more horrid impieties against God, in contempt of his holy word and ordinances, than the spirit of Enthusiasm ? This gained encouragement and success in the late grand rebellion, was principally instrumental in promoting all the miseries and confusions consequent thereupon, and is still making near approaches

proaches to the like kind of disorders, under the leaders of Methodism,

Wherefore, far be it from me, or any Christian Divine, to preach up the inward teaching, the impulses and motions of the Holy Spirit in the souls of men; because nothing can be more inconsistent, groundless, and false, nor can any pretences be productive of greater mischiefs to the Christian world. These plain truths, prudently considered, and with due authority promoted, would greatly contribute to put an end to the turbulent spirit of Enthusiasm and Fanaticism now raging in these kingdoms.

The Methodists, boasting so frequently of the inward aids of the Holy Spirit in the gifts of prayer and preaching, pretending these to be the glorious immediate work of God upon their souls; and the Quakers, asserting the universal manifestation, and immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, to be the basis of their religion; would naturally induce every judicious, inquisitive person, to examine the truth and foundation of their boasted principles; which internal aids and immediate teaching of the Spirit are not the natural ordinary means of grace, whereby God informeth and assisteth mankind to work out their sal-

vation; but are notions impiously and blasphemously asserted, as gifts of the Spirit, though at the same time it can be made to appear, there are no other than the external aids and assistances of the Spirit, as the universal means of grace, ordained of God, through Jesus Christ and the inspired Apostles, to lead us into all truth, and to teach us all things necessary for us to know, in order to salvation. Wherefore, in demonstrating and proving their pretences contrary to the manner of God's dealing with men, incompatible with the nature of man, against reason and experience, unsupported by Scripture, and, in the main, to be groundless and false principles, I do by consequence effectually destroy the very root and foundation of Quakerism, and all Enthusiasm; there being no other light, or sufficient means of grace, to direct and guide us, but the grace and truth only which came by Jesus Christ, the universal Gospel of salvation, the true and everlasting foundation of Christianity.

By thus laying before you a plain view and demonstration of the true nature of Divine Grace, in all those ordinary aids and assistances of the Spirit, derived from the inspired writings, I do likewise thereby entirely confute the whole Deistical Scheme, which supposes that Christianity

is nothing more than a mere repetition of the law of nature. We allow, indeed, that the Christian religion is agreeable with the law of nature; that nothing is revealed therein contrary to right reason and the eternal relation of things; but, let these gentlemen pretend as much as they please to right reason and religion, at best, they will fall infinitely short of ever coming to the knowledge of that divine faith and truth revealed to us in the Christian dispensation, by the mere light of nature: for, by the utmost efforts and united powers of all nature, they could never discover the person and office of a Mediator, how God would be appeased, our sins be pardoned, and our consciences be quieted; they could never have discovered those divine precepts and doctrines contained in the Gospel, nor those immutable reasons and motives to require our faith, and enforce our obedience; nor could it be morally possible for them to discover the divine aids and assistances to sinful creatures, which the Gospel daily affords mankind. Nothing less than the divine wisdom and goodness both devised the means, by extraordinary and preternatural revelations, and discovered the methods most effectually to improve our reason, and bring about the great work of our redemption and salvation, through Jesus Christ: Almighty God, on his
part,

part, having done all that is necessary to recover man, his lost creature; and if men perish, it must be wholly owing to their own wilful obstinacy, pride, and wickedness.

Pride was the beginning of sin, caused the Angels to rebel against the Almighty Creator, and cast them out of heaven. The same inducement that effected their downfall, Satan well knew, would be the most likely means to work the fall of all mankind, in corrupting the original stock. He no sooner made a trial, "Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil;" so said, and done. Pride is still so deeply rooted in our nature, that it is the general source of the greatest evils and disorders mankind commit; the heart is so full of it, that every one thinks better of himself than of others, better of his own endowments and perfections; his wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and conduct, to be inferior to none; but more particularly shews itself in persons of an enthusiastic turn of mind, in that spiritual pride and worst of evils, which sets them above the ordinary level of mankind, and puffs them up with Gnostic principles, to presume their reason is a sufficient guide to salvation, and to ridicule all revelation: others, in a much higher strain, assume to themselves the inward aids of the Spirit, and to be
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gifted above their brethren in their own conceits, to know more, and to teach men with a spiritual assurance; these ever look upon themselves to be God's peculiar favourites, and not like the ignorant, profane people of the world! Supercilious treatment and disdainful expression must always be expected from these quarters—"Stand by thyself—come not near me—I am more holy than thou"—and whenever they do put on a spirit of meekness, it is in order to deceive and seduce others. As their spiritual pride hath overcome, and drawn them into sin, so are they, by the same means, ever as ready to entice others under the same delusion, as the Devil was to seduce our first parents—"Ye shall be as Gods."

The spirit of pride, deceit, and Enthusiasm, is equally as conspicuous among our pretended men of reason and the Gifted Teachers: they confine Salvation to themselves; all others are led on by superstition and priestcraft. Some stick not to tell us, we are dead in trespasses and sins; that we are going into hell with our eyes wide open, or are asleep in the Devil's arms: but they (dear and holy saints!) are regenerated, sanctified, and elected! They have received the Spirit of God, and are feelingly affected with his holy operations; and thenceforth, under this spirit of delusion and
pride,

pride, commence Apostles at large: you shall evermore behold them, puffed up with an overgrown stock of spiritual pride, to take it in their heads to be fully authorized and commissioned to pray and preach, wherever the Spirit leads them; to pronounce the terrors of the Lord, and nothing less than damnation, to all who neglect to hear their effusions, and to follow their teaching, as if immediately sent of God; whereby they turn away the hearts of many unlearned and unwary people from their true guides, to enlist themselves under the banner of those new Lights, and to herd among their deluded hearers, who are tossed about with every vain blast of doctrine, and ignorantly believe those their *extempore* vociferations to be the gift of inspiration; and those violent distortions, those howling convulsive fits, which many persons frequently fall into, at the time of their effusions, so suddenly, and just at the instant of some extraordinary motion or harangue of the preacher, that these they look upon as the glorious works of God, a miraculous kind of confirmation to their gift of teaching, and that the Spirit, as they say, goes along with their prayers and preachings.

It would almost excite your laughter, to know how they account for those extraordinary kinds of

of agitations, or agonies: The person whoever falls, being under supposed convictions, they have been bold enough to say, The Holy Spirit and the Devil are striving whether shall have possession of that person's soul; whether sin or grace shall reign there: and as God is stronger than the Devil, you may imagine, if any principles or signs of grace appear afterwards, the said person then has infallibly received the Holy Spirit, is converted, and assured of salvation, as if it were written on the forehead:—Such is the only saving Grace among these new Gospellers! Strange! as if it were not sufficient for Almighty God to confer his Grace by natural and external means, but these inward mighty aids of the Spirit alone must bring about the conversion, regeneration, sanctification, and salvation of all Christians; or, according to their belief and doctrine, all men must perish everlastingly! This is a notable kind of conjuring art to raise the admiration of vulgar apprehensions, to pretend a reformation of the Gospel, and new-model the lives of Christians. Or, to give you a more exact character of them in the words of the Apostle—2 Tim. iii. 6, 7. “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of

the truth." So infallibly true are the words of the Apostle, that it is morally impossible they should ever come to the knowledge of the truth, so long as their learning and knowledge are grounded upon error, with all deceivableness and lying wonders. And when men are thus wrong in pretending to the inward aids, the immediate teaching and gifts of the Holy Spirit, (as I shall plainly demonstrate in this Treatise, being inconsistent with the manner of God's dealing with men, groundless, and unsupported by Scripture, reason, and experience, and absolutely false in fact; God having withdrawn his Spirit, with all those extraordinary inward aids and operations, from the Church, with the inspired Apostles,) the fact itself being groundless and false, it will necessarily follow, that whatsoever doctrine or teaching men build upon that foundation, must be erroneous and false, being the dictates of a fallible, lying Spirit of Enthusiasm, if I may be allowed to speak, blasphemously attributed to the Holy Ghost.

Wherefore, I cannot be persuaded to approve of my antagonist, either for a wise man, a learned man, or an honest man. A wise man he cannot be, on account of his many senseless Journals, his mighty effusions of the Spirit, his frequent

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communications with God—monstrous to be thought on!—for our God is a consuming fire:—a learned man he cannot be; for he is “ever learning, and is never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;” but, being wrong in principles, is industriously learning and endeavouring to propagate errors and enthusiasm among the people:—and consequently, he cannot be an honest man, under these circumstances, who wilfully opposes the welfare and peace of the establishment; who, having deceived others, is the more unwilling to retract his errors, or desist from his audacious enterprise; who, having apostatised from his brethren, afterwards abused them, learning his followers to be as industrious as himself in the like capacity. This is that wisdom which is not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish; making it an employment to deceive and abuse others, perhaps to the loss of their precious and immortal souls. A deception of this nature is attended with the worst of mischiefs imaginable, disturbing the peace of families, the peace of the Church, and the inward peace of men’s minds;—an *industrious calling*, to fill his followers brains with the spirit of *Enthusiasm*, and to empty their *pockets*! In these points of learning, wisdom, and honesty, he may be allowed to be a very learned proficient! But, in regard to

the inward aids and suggestions of the Holy Spirit, how inconsistent and contradictory must these appear, to the nature of things, the truth of facts, and the common experience of mankind ! Let it be considered, that the Spirit of God is a Spirit of great power and glory ; which, if it were to operate immediately upon our souls, by internal motions or suggestions, would most powerfully influence and enlighten our minds, beyond all possible degrees of external aids from Scripture, or those we derive from reason and human understanding ; our spiritual capacities would be raised to so great a pitch, as nearly to resemble the glorious intuition of unembodied Spirits and Angels ; we should perfectly perceive, know, and understand, in a most delightful and wonderful manner ; men would unavoidably speak and act, both in demonstration of the Spirit and of power : an immediate communication of this nature would be as perceptible and different from the instinct of nature and reason, as the intellectual faculties of our souls are distinct from the affections of our corporeal senses ; and as nothing of this kind appears above the notices of Scripture, the common facts and experiences of mankind, it must be groundless and absurd, to attribute such common affections to the immediate operations of the Holy Ghost.

Wherefore

Wherefore I am led to affirm, that God doth not communicate the gifts of his Spirit by any internal motions or suggestions whatsoever; that there are none of those pretended effusions or gifts of the Spirit which some so much boast of, notwithstanding their praying and preaching *extempore*, and which they vainly suggest to be an infallible demonstration of some extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost: which, indeed, is no proof at all, nor any thing else they can bring for the inward teaching of the Spirit; since those habits are acquired, and indeed appear to me the most abominable and vilest suggestion imaginable, against the honour and dignity of the Divine Majesty, to be charged upon the Holy Spirit; since there are none who pretend to it, but for the most part are abandoned and dissolute in sense and manners; and therefore, I assert further, is neither the effect of reason or revelation: because, if these were duly attended to, this wild extravagant spirit of Enthusiasm would fly hence, and vanish into eternal perdition.

Again, let it be considered, those vile imaginations and delusions, impiously charged upon the Spirit of Truth, have ever distracted the affairs of mankind, and the peace of religion, in
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all parts of the world. The pretences to the inward aids of the Spirit have ever been productive of the most fatal and pernicious consequences to Christianity, both sacred and profane history do attest: even in that miraculous age, the blessed Apostles had such corrupt, proud evil-doers to contend with, who pretended to the gifts of the Spirit, and deceived many by their false suggestions—as, the Gnosticks, the Nicholaitans, Cerinthus, and others; that with their utmost Apostolic care, and the help of the true Spirit, they had much to do to prevent the growth of false teachers, with the ruin of the true Church: and for the more effectual security of the Faith, Christians are enjoined to try the Spirits, according to the Apostles doctrines, whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world, by which they might know:—For if they were not sent, or did not teach according to the canon of Scripture, “Hereby (saith the Apostle) know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.” And nothing ought more carefully to be guarded against, than all pretences to the inward aids of the Spirit, (bold and false as they are,) considering the innumerable and exceeding great mischiefs these real delusions have wrought in the Christian world; and though many moderate and serious Divines have been
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led into this strain of infatuation, from ill-grounded opinions, and some texts of Scripture taken in a literal sense, which, in a figurative and very usual manner of expression with the holy penmen, are very distant from teaching any such gift as the inward aid of the Spirit. And I am fully persuaded, all such notions are entirely groundless and false, tending to the dishonour of God and his holy word, the subversion of revelation and all sound religion.

Now I do sincerely wish, all such chimerical, impious pretences, were utterly exploded from Christian divinity, as contradictory to the honour, wisdom, goodness, and providence of God, manifested and concerned in the Gospel dispensation for the happiness of our souls. For, are we not all taught of God, by external and natural means, through Jesus Christ and his blessed Apostles, who were assisted by the Spirit of God, in all things necessary to salvation? and shall fallible men pretend to teach any other internal aids, so inconsistent with God's ordinary dealing with men, contrary to the nature of things and constant experience, and subversive of the true end, purpose, and effects of Scripture means, which Almighty God, of his free grace and bounty, through Jesus Christ, hath liberally indulged to
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all mankind, without respect of persons ? The Scriptures are open and free, at the command and use of all men—God so designed ; which, I affirm, no Divines can say of the internal aids of the Spirit ; and therefore such a tenet (whatever is intended by it) doth highly impeach the honour, wisdom, goodness, and providence of God, in the salvation or destruction of men's souls, by the partial distribution of this pretended gift ; and must certainly be false, because contrary to the free goodness and grace of God to mankind, in the main design of revelation, which assures us, “ God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Pet. iii. 9. And how this repentance, faith, and all other graces, are effected in our souls, the Spirit of God doth abundantly assure us, is by external means, and therefore by no inward teaching ; which, if it be an ordinary gift, we should need no evidence to attest it : but give me any one instance, proof, or example, from Scripture or experience, to demonstrate the infallible certainty of those inward aids of the Spirit, if any one can, and believe it as will ! I am very clear, the Christian revelation is so perfect, so beneficial and universal, in all its means of grace and hopes of glory, as to need no such adventitious helps as the pretended inward aids of the Spirit. And this

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was well known to the primitive Fathers: for were not Montanus and his followers condemned by an orthodox Council, in the early age of Christianity, for pretending to the aids of the Spirit, in the gift of prophecy and teaching, in the gifts of mortification, austerity, and example of life? from whence have sprung too many heresies and schisms, in the Christian Church, to be here named; but principally, Manichœism and Mahometanism, which soon overturned Christianity in the greatest parts of Asia and Africa, and there reign triumphant to this day. The Enthusiasm that hath ever infested religion in Popish or Protestant countries, has taken all its rise from the same corrupt fountain—the inward aids of the Spirit: which ought to serve as a caution to all Christian Divines, against maintaining or propagating such a pernicious doctrine, so fully freighted with all the errors and mischiefs that can disturb the peace of the Christian Church. And that no real good or advantage can accrue to mankind from such pretended notions of the inward aids of the Spirit, may be proved from hence; that upon the most inquisitive and nicest observation possible, the lives and manners of those persons who boast so much of the inward aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit, are not more exemplary and more holy than other

Christian men who are only guided by the externals of religion, if so holy : for it is very apparent, many of those persons (though they may carry an outside religion) are egregiously tainted with the spirit of pride and hypocrisy, deceivers and being deceived—A sufficient demonstration, that their positions of the inward teaching and aids of the Spirit are very dangerous, false, and impious.

Innumerable instances and arguments may be brought, to prove the inconsistency of all such pretences, and that it is not the common measure of God's dealing with his creature, Man. Take one general, I may say, universal instance, for all—Gen. vi. 3. “And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh : [i. e. God here declares, he will not always bear with the grievous provocations and sins of a wicked world ;] yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” So much time God in his great compassion would allow them, to consider with themselves, and to repent of their evil ways. It is said afterwards, ver. 5. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Now, if ever the inward aids of the Spirit had been necessary

necessary to encounter with the inward corruptions of men, to assist and renew their hearts, and bring them to amendment; certainly no juncture could be thought more favourable than under that great and universal degeneracy. But no other than external means were granted, as most agreeable to the infinite wisdom of God, and most befitting the nature of man. Noah was ordained of God to instruct and reform the world by preaching, as St. Peter expresseth it, 2 Epist. ii. 4. "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." And certainly, if there be any analogy in reason and the nature of things, there can be no real motive or necessity for the inward aids of the Spirit, under the glorious light of the Gospel, diffused throughout the world by the Son of God and the preaching of his Apostles.

From the many prejudices that have been long settled in the minds of men, I am very sensible, a strange outcry will be made, from most quarters, against my opinion, for rejecting a doctrine so generally received and applauded; but that shall be no reason with me for not opposing the errors of a multitude, when I can do no dishonour to God or man, to reason or revelation, in

defence of the truth, and to primitive Christianity, uncorrupted with the glosses and doctrines of men. How will it be said—Senseless, weak man! to pretend to know better than all the learned and great men of this age and former times! to contend against a Gospel promise, a Scripture doctrine, so interesting to the souls of men!—To obviate all proofs and arguments from that quarter, let the matter be learnedly discussed. And therefore let it be judiciously observed, that the penmen of holy Scripture frequently write down the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in a figurative way, and scarcely any thing is more usual with them than to put the cause for the effects; in referring to the cause, they naturally include, and lead you to understand, the general effects under that cause: this ought very carefully to be noted, for the right understanding of Scripture, and is most judiciously observed by that truly reverend and very learned Divine, Dr. John Scott.—See his Sermons, Vol. II. p. 209. on John iii. 16.—

“ For thus it is very ordinary with the Scripture
 “ to express the natural effects and consequents
 “ of things by their causes and principles. ‘ This
 ‘ is the love of God, (saith the Apostle,) that
 ‘ we keep his commandments.’ 1 John v. 3.
 “ Whereas in strictness of speaking, our keeping
 “ his commandments is only the effect or conse-
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“ quence of our loving him. So Prov. viii. 13.
 “ The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.” Where-
 “ as indeed, this is only the effect or consequence
 “ of the fear of the Lord.” See further several
 instances there ; and he also says, “ Many other
 “ places I might easily give you, where the na-
 “ tural effects and consequences are in Scripture
 “ expressed by their causes and principles.”

Wherefore, to open the truth of this matter more clearly, let us consider some of the many texts of Scripture that are usually brought for the proof of the inward aids of the Spirit ; and, when rightly understood and applied, will speak nothing to that purpose. And first the promise, John xiv. 16. “ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” Now, Mr. W—l-y, according to his usual marks of sincerity, would persuade all men, that this promise of Christ is general, and made to all Christians ; saying, artfully enough, “ Will any one say, this “ belongs not to all Christians ?” The least consideration will plainly shew, this peculiarly and emphatically belongs to the Apostles of Christ only : And further I observe, this promise is expressed in so singular a manner, that, I apprehend, it will totally defeat all pretensions to
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the Spirit: for Christ engageth himself only to pray the Father; the disciples being in no wise capacitated or allowed to pray for such an extraordinary and super-eminent favour, as the sending the Third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, God the Holy Ghost, to be another Comforter: nothing less than God the Father, and God the Son, conspiring together, could be efficacious and powerful enough to appoint this mission of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; no other Mediator or Advocate sufficient to procure this inestimable gift of God, but the eternal Son of God; whose peculiar dignity and office it was, to intercede with God the Father for sinful man. And therefore it is highly presumptuous, and very unfitting for either men or Angels, to mediate, or pray the Father in this transcendent work of giving or sending God the Holy Ghost as another Comforter to the blessed Apostles, when God the Son was gone to the Father, to appear in the presence of God for all mankind. Considering the loss the Apostles sustained of their blessed Lord and Master, who before had been so graciously amiable and endearing to them in his converse and company; and moreover, the great work they had to complete, in converting the world; it seems nothing less, than so great a gift and powerful an assistant was altogether necessary for them;

them ; and therefore it doth not appear at all necessary for any other private Christian, who was never endeared with the company of the blessed Jesus, who could not suffer the like loss with the Apostles, nor could have the like arduous employment to transact : they were not to expect the immediate assistance and teaching of the Spirit, who were to act in a private capacity only ; but were entirely to depend upon that revelation and comfortable assistance the Holy Spirit had given the world by the Apostles : and for this cause, the Spirit itself speaketh thus to Christians having the means, “ Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling.”

The next proof that offers itself to be considered, and which is the most general that is usually brought to this purpose, is from Luke xi. 13. “ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ? ” Where if it be meant to ask or pray the Father to give the Holy Ghost, it plainly contradicts the alone mediation of Jesus Christ, in the words above cited, where Christ assures his disciples, “ I will pray the Father.” Which is absurd ; and therefore this text is figurative, The cause is here put for the effects.

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To give the Holy Spirit, means no more than this—to give the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, to them that ask the Father : which sense is plain and true. For I would fain know out of all the men that have ever been in the world, of any one who was ever so importunate and fervent in asking the Father for the Holy Spirit, that did ever, at his own influence, receive that all-glorious Spirit, and was infallibly conscious he received it as the immediate gift of the Father : for I must insist, some extraordinary supernatural tokens and effects must attend the receiving it. But nothing of this kind was ever known to appear, unless by men inspired of God ; and they were never known to seek it, or receive it, at their own request ; and therefore it is highly irrational and absurd, to talk of the inward aids of the Holy Spirit, without giving some demonstrable proofs and signs of its gracious operations. As for good thoughts, good suggestions, and pious resolutions, how sudden, frequent and casually they may spring up in our minds, is nothing more than common ; these, 'tis well known, arise merely from the natural powers and faculties of our souls, as they may be enlightened and assisted by the external means and aids of the Gospel : to alledge these as proofs of the inward teaching is indeed senseless ; if you
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can produce no other experience of the immediate gifts of the Spirit, they are altogether most absurd; because these are plain demonstrations of the external means which Almighty God hath graciously vouchsafed to all mankind, as he is no respecter of persons, but doeth good to all, to the just and unjust, to the unmerciful and unthankful. And so it is true, the most profligate and ungodly sinners have many times good thoughts and good resolutions, as well as the most holy; especially when they are awed thereto by good company, good discourses, or other religious duties; which is another of the plainest demonstrations in the world, that such operations proceed not from any inward aids of the Holy Spirit, but from natural and external means only.

Let me next consider Rom. viii. 9. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Figurative expressions—parallel to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. See ver. 1. Meaning them who embraced, put on Christ, and entered into covenant and communion with him by baptism. Such, the Apostle tells you, ver. 9. "are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of

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God dwell in you ;” that is, the effects of it— the gifts and graces of God’s Spirit, by the external means and aids of the Gospel of Christ ; the belief and fear of God, love and obedience to him : Nothing can be more plain, that this is all that can be intended by this expression— “ If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”

Again, the Enthusiast saith, “ Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Which means not the real Spirit of Christ, which is eternally incommunicable, and separate from sinners ; but the phrase signifieth the like temper, good disposition and quality of spirit, which was in Christ : he can be no disciple of Christ’s, for he requires all his disciples to be like himself, to be merciful, kind, pure, and holy, as he is holy.

Again, ver. 14. “ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Now it is equally as absurd to bring this as a proof of being led by any internal aids of the Spirit, as any of the former texts : because, by the Spirit of God, we are here to understand, the Gospel or Grace of God ; for St. Paul’s argument in the next verse plainly shews by what means they are the sons of God : “ Now they were not as Heathens, having put on Christ ;”
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but it is effected immediately upon entering into the Christian covenant by Baptism, whereby they received the Spirit of adoption. By those external means of faith in Christ, Repentance and Baptism, God then looked upon such as his adopted sons, and they were virtually entituled to call God, Father.

The Gospel is called the Grace of God, which bringeth salvation; and this is the Grace I am pleading for. Nay, sometimes the Gospel is called the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit: [i. e. not of the Law, but of the Gospel:] for the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life:" i. e. as he elsewhere explains himself—The law is a ministration of death; but the Gospel brings life and immortality to light: and that this is the meaning is plain from what follows, ver. 7, 8. "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, [which is a plain description of the law of Moses,] how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" And consonantly hereunto, by the Spirit, we may understand the motives and arguments of the Gospel: accordingly my interpretation is just and good.

All other instances and texts of Scripture that I know of, rationally explained, point all to the same natural and external aids, which the word of God, truly interpreted, effectually worketh upon men's minds : Thus Repentance, I own, is sometimes imputed to be the gift of God ; not from any immediate motions or suggestions of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men, but from the ordinary means and effects of Gospel preaching : because the faith and persuasion of the goodness of God, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, is the true motive and moral cause of it; which cause being a revelation from the gift of God, the effect Repentance may justly be said to be his gift, (though not coming immediately from God, but by ordinary means :) For the Gentiles had no motives to Repentance, and the Jews none in comparison of the Christian ; and therefore to give them such motives, was the same thing as giving them both Repentance. And what was the effect of preaching remission of sins to the Gentiles in the name of Jesus ?—The Jews themselves are forced to confess it—That God had granted to the Gentiles “Repentance unto life,” Acts x. 18. implying, that doctrine to be the fountain of Repentance. It will be necessary here to end this argument : for were

I to search out and put together the many gross absurdities, inconsistencies, contradictory senses of the same persons; the long-received, illiterate interpretations of sacred texts; mischievous reveries and impious pretences to the Holy Spirit; the immediate and inward aids thereof, which have exercised the tongues and pens of mankind, one might write volumes and volumes in Folio.

I was, as too many others are, led into that vulgar error, 'till the common, the many vain and blasphemous pretences to the Spirit, to the inward aids and immediate teaching of the Holy Ghost, which inconsiderate men so frequently challenged to themselves, and boasted of, (enough to shock the sober thoughts of any Christian,) put me upon a diligent enquiry and search into the nature and operation of these pretended inward gifts and graces of God's Spirit, to the more effectual discovery of that grand, mysterious imposition of iniquity, and to the confusion of modern Enthusiasm.

Give me leave now to illustrate the nature of Divine Grace, to explain this point more advantageously, by the most familiar instances following: as, when we ask, or pray to God, for the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit
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of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the Spirit of God's holy fear: To shew how all these several great blessings and glorious effects shall be wrought in us, I answer, Not by any internal impulses, invisible motions or operations of the Holy Spirit in our souls; but by the external means and aids of God's holy word. For are not the great doctrines of the holy Scriptures, of that powerful, divine, and efficacious nature, as to be able to make us wise unto salvation? and is not this the most sublime and spiritual, the greatest and truest wisdom—to be wise here, and for ever hereafter? The Spirit of understanding—now, in order to the attainment of this noble endowment, what better and greater improvements can we make to our understandings, than by searching the holy Scriptures? they inform our understandings in the revelation of God's holy will in all things necessary for us to know; they teach us to understand our duty to God, our neighbours, and ourselves; to be at peace with him and all the world; to live in the unity of the faith and pure religion: This is that peace of God which passeth all understanding. And as to the Spirit of counsel—where can any one receive more serious and good advice, more spiritual consolation and counsel, than the word
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of God affords mankind, if all men had but the prudence and consideration to consult it as often as their affairs required them. And as for ghostly strength—the holy Scriptures fortify our souls with the blessed hopes and rewards of futurity; they strengthen and keep up our interest in the kingdom of glory, through the redemption and mediation of Jesus Christ, in the gracious pardon of our sins, and the favourable reconciliation with God; and under the greatest miseries of this life, they propose to us the blessed example of the great Author of our salvation, who was perfected thro' sufferings; that when we have suffered a while here, we may reign with him in eternal glory hereafter. Next, as to the Spirit of knowledge—The most spiritual and profoundest knowledge, of the utmost necessity and importance for man to know, is abundantly revealed to us in the holy Scriptures, that which more nearly concerns us than all mysteries of arts and sciences; there we are acquainted with the creation of the world; the fall of man; his great wickedness; the destruction of the old world, with the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark, and the several creatures therein, to renew the face of the earth; the marvellous dispensations of God's providence through the succeeding ages; his promise and covenant with Abraham; his wonders in Egypt,

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in the Red-sea, in the wilderness, and the land of Canaan; and above all, the condescending and amazing love of God in the redemption of the world, through Jesus Christ; with all the means of grace and hopes of glory:—A mystery the angels desire to look into, (perhaps the more thankfully to praise and adore the All-glorious Author of so great salvation,) but will not fully be made known 'till the general consummation, to give a more universal cause of joy, adoration, and praise to Almighty God, at that ever-glorious, triumphant event. And further, as to the Spirit of true godliness—there is nothing deserves that divine appellation, among all the precepts of morality and the rules of holy living given by the sons of men; all that they could possibly devise by the light of nature, are not comparable to the doctrines of the Gospel: besides, they wanted those great sanctions and motives, to enforce the practice of those few rules they had: But in the Scriptures, all the relative and sublime duties between God and man, between one man and another, are set forth by the Gospel in the clearest light imaginable, and God hath made our present and eternal happiness the necessary consequence of our duty and obedience; and no less than eternal rewards and punishments are propounded, to excite our hopes and fears, the great springs of

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of action, to keep us in the ways of godliness. And further, to promote the true spirit of godliness, the holy Scriptures afford us the most endearing examples, precepts, and motives, to lead godly, righteous, and sober lives ; and, to consummate our imperfect works of piety, promise to crown us with everlasting glory in the end. Moreover, in the last place, as to the Spirit of God's holy fear—where can we be so fully instructed therein, as from his holy word ; where God is pleased to unveil his divinity, and reveal himself to us, as far as may be necessary for our finite capacities and present circumstances ? there his incommunicable attributes, his divine perfections, are so plainly represented to our understandings, as to excite our belief in him, and our fear of him ; not a servile, lifeless fear ; but such a reverential, holy, and active fear, as will promote our love and obedience to him, our trust and dependance on him. There our duty to God is clearly set forth in its proper extent : To believe in him, to fear him, and to love him, with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all the strength. Thus we fear God for his power, wisdom, justice, mercy, goodness, and truth ; we rejoice unto him with reverence and godly fear.

By this time it may be plainly understood, how these spiritual gifts and graces are effected in our souls ; not by any inward aids and immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, but only by the real external means of God's holy word. And this account the Holy Spirit confirmeth, assuring us, the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. And St. Paul says, Heb. iv. 12. " For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart." It will readily find access to the very inmost recesses of our souls. As to the word itself, the precepts and doctrines of the holy Scriptures, we do not ascribe any spiritual or personal capacity of knowledge or discernment to this word of God : but the true meaning is, applying it as a rule, it will naturally discover to us the rectitude or obliquity of the most secret thoughts and intentions of all our hearts ; it judiciously discriminateth the purposes and thoughts of the heart, layeth a becoming check and restraint upon those thoughts against the commission of evil, and raiseth an utter abhorrence and indignation against all our sinful thoughts, words, and deeds. Again, it not only discourageth

discourageth evil thoughts, but layeth a sure foundation for good intentions; it mightily encourageth, assisteth, and promoteth such in us; it preventeth, and powerfully influenceth us in all our good actions, to worship, to praise, and adore the great Author of our beings; to love our neighbour as one's self; and to be pure and upright in our lives and conversations.

Thus Almighty God hath ordained the holy Scriptures as the only natural and ordinary means, to enlighten our understandings, to direct our wills, and sweetly to influence our thoughts and intentions, without the least force put upon the freedom of our rational faculties; setting before us good and evil, life and death, with the sanctions of eternal rewards and punishments; when they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. Thus the inspired writings are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. So mercifully benign and gracious hath the God of the spirits of all flesh been to the sons of men, not only in giving his Son Jesus Christ to be a propitiation and sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, but shewing him to

be the way, the truth, and the life; teaching, by example and precept, an universal obedience to God, and never-failing charity to all men; promulgating the doctrine of this salvation to all mankind; that every one who hath heard the glad tidings of the Gospel, may know how to refuse the evil, and chuse the good; and who hath been taught as the truth is in Jesus, may chearfully embrace this divine revelation of the Spirit, from whence all these natural aids and assistances are derived, to enable us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

These, be it known, are the universal ordinary means of grace, of faith, repentance, with other fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace, in the communion of Christ's holy Catholic Church here on earth; which blessed means every one may readily take hold of, being freely tendered to all the world, and may advantageously pursue to their great comfort and happiness (if they please) both here and hereafter. And is it not the greatest mercy, that we are redeemed from death unto life, and that all the necessary means of grace are within our own reach and power? And certainly, it is every one's duty and interest heartily to embrace the mercy offered, when the overture, considered in itself, is every way so amiable and
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mighty easy, that any one's own sincere endeavours, co-operating with these terms, without doubt will effectually secure the present welfare and everlasting salvation of his soul: but all who are immersed in a course of folly, negligence, and sin, may, at their peril, despise and misuse these gracious, universal means of salvation; they may turn their backs with disdain, and continue obstinate against the light of God's word, to the loss of their most precious and immortal souls; for wilful ignorance will admit of no plea, any more than wilful disobedience, both acts being equally voluntary, equally aggravating, and equally destructive: for how shall they escape, who neglect so great salvation? i.e. the doctrine of salvation tendered by the Gospel. And we are assured by another Scripture, Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other [doctrine or grace;] for there is none other name [or authority, for Name signifies Authority] under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." And therefore, to close up this argument, hear what the infallible word of God declares concerning those who refuse to admit the light of the blessed Gospel of Christ, and to obey it; carefully observe: The Holy Spirit represents to you the certainty and glory of that important transaction, under these tremendous circumstances,

cumstances, that every soul may tremble and fear before him. 2 Theff. i. 7, 8, 9. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Lastly, observe the joyful condition of the faithful Christian, ver. 10. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day.

To these plain arguments and Scripture testimonies, I shall add the judicious opinion and sense of a learned Divine, the Author of Deism delineated, in his Letter, the end of Vol. II. in the Addition, p. 12. in reply to the argument of the Deist, viz. "That God's governing the world by a Vice-gerent, implied imperfection, or want of ability in God." Here the intention of the Deist was, to exclude Christ from being God's Vice-gerent in regard to mankind. I shall give you the substance of our Author's argument and opinion together.

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“ It ought to be considered, that if God’s
 “ making use of other agents to accomplish his
 “ great and glorious designs in our moral world,
 “ should appear any sort of argument of his in-
 “ ability, or the least impeachment of his divine
 “ prerogatives of knowlege, power, and pre-
 “ sence, it would prove too much, and instantly
 “ shew itself, to be an unreasonable and fallaci-
 “ ous way of arguing ; concluding against, and
 “ plainly importing a denial (as it evidently does)
 “ of all the appearances and certain truths of
 “ fact : For by that way of arguing, God must
 “ cease to act at all ; or, in other words, there
 “ could remain no conceivable communication
 “ of the infinite Creator with us his frail depen-
 “ dant creatures, but that which is *immediate* and
 “ unexperienced ; a communication, in all pro-
 “ bability, unendurable by sublunary creatures,
 “ as we are compounded of flesh and spirit, rea-
 “ son and passion, heaven and earth ; and con-
 “ sequently, impracticable in itself to mortals in
 “ general, upon any other supposition but that
 “ of God’s either altering our common ways of
 “ perception, or affecting every one in common
 “ by way of Trance, (a method, doubtless, to
 “ the particular persons favoured with it, equi-
 “ valent to stopping up their senses, and, for so
 “ long,

“ long, laying aside the usual methods of percep-
 “ tion;) because, in the present state of things,
 “ the discerning Spirit within us is so situated,
 “ as to be made to receive impressions from the
 “ intervention of External, and the apparatus of
 “ Sensible things; insomuch that *God manifest in*
 “ *the Flesh*, seems necessary and indispensable for
 “ recovering *Man lost in the Spirit*,” &c.

My arguments against the inward aids of the Spirit coincide so advantageously in this point, that they mutually confirm each other: the undeniable truth and clear evidence of external means evert the very foundations of Enthusiasm, and appear very serviceable towards the cure of Deism. He must do the utmost violence to reason and experience, who can be a Deist, or a senseless Enthusiast, after the serious perusal of this Treatise. This Author's determination here concludes so strongly against the inward aids of the Spirit, (treated of in the first chapter of this volume,) that it must appear a strange oversight in the same person to contradict himself; but so it is: and I have observed the same so frequently in other persons, to differ with themselves concerning the inward aids of the Spirit, that from hence one may conclude it to be a vulgar error; seeing none of the learned have ever been able

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to give an intelligible and explanatory account of this inward gift : and though all may agree in the pretence, yet none at all agree how this aid is received, and the manner of its operations; nor to account whether the soul may be passive under its impressions, or active, to resist its motions ; whether able to retain its operations to the most effectual purposes, or to let such aids and suggestions immediately slip out of mind, without any effect; with many other necessary conditions too difficult to be solved : and therefore I look upon it as a point in divinity, the most inconsistent, groundless, and false, that ever could pass so long upon the world without being thoroughly digested, truly stated, and confirmed.

'Tis not large and voluminous tracts, upon a subject which may be interesting to a few persons only, that can give real worth or sterling value to a composition ; but it is the dignity and importance of the matter, the purity and conformity of it with truth and right reason ; the influence and knowledge whereof is of universal moment and concern, worthy the serious attention of Christians in all ages, to be rightly informed in the true aids and natural means of grace : Such is the present investigation of this long, abstruse, and mysterious point of Christian persuasion, con-

cerning the inward aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit in our souls; all which immediate motions and suggestions, I take for granted, are clearly proved to be absurd and false, now no more to be credited; nothing, in reality, but an impious assertion, a manifest contradiction to the Spirit of Truth: And, though I have gone out of the trodden path by myself, leaving the long-embraced prejudices and vulgarly received opinions of men, and have alone pursued the most direct, plain, and true way to come to the knowledge of all the natural, ordinary aids and assistances of God's Holy Spirit, the true and certain manner of the conveyance, as well as attainment, of Divine Grace, and that by external means it is necessarily wrought in us; I shall leave it to your own further knowledge, observation, and experience, to confirm the truth of my assertion.

As I heartily profess myself a friend to truth, and to all mankind, I humbly recommend this friendly Treatise to your perusal. Take it for your guide, and it will safely lead you the most sure way, free from all danger of those strange and corrupt ways of Schismatics, Enthusiasts, Deists, and others, who either ignorantly or wickedly corrupt the word of God, mistake the means of Divine Grace, and preach up the inward aids
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of the Spirit; which alone, in my apprehension, hath been the true cause of many, or most, of those disorders and mischiefs to the Christian Church in all ages: for even in the times of the Apostles there were proud men, of corrupt minds, who pretended to the inward aids of the Holy Spirit, no whit behind the Apostles; who seduced others, perverting the way of truth; and ever since, to this day, the same wicked pretences are carried on, to subvert the faith of Christianity, and to disturb the peace of the Church: 'Tis well known, innumerable and pernicious consequences attend this vulgar imposition.

As I bestow my labours in the public service, I humbly beg the publication of this Treatise may be acceptable to the Christian reader, and hope that men of genius and learning will pardon the imperfections of the Author, while I endeavour to promote the discovery of error, and the cause of truth; and, by cordially joining with me in defence of true Gospel Grace, may put a timely stop to the wicked progress and great torrent of Enthusiasm, which seems to be bearing down all religion and common sense before it. May this public tribute powerfully advance the great and noble designs of establishing truth and peace among all Christians, 'till time shall be no more!

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CONSIDERATIONS
OFFERED TO OUR PRESENT
ENTHUSIASTS.

IT ought seriously to be considered, that many well-designing Christians go to these fanatic Teachers, who pretend to pray and preach by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in hopes of getting improvement and better instructions in their Christian knowledge ; but as it is demonstrable they have no immediate assistance from the Holy Spirit, it is also plainly evident they are impostors and deceivers of mankind, by pretending to have extraordinary gifts which they have not ; and therefore ought to be detested and avoided as much as possible : But supposing they had the best natural or acquired parts, it is morally impossible they should pray or preach
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in more learned, more godly and edifying forms or discourses, than are composed by the Clergy of the Established Church; and if people will depart from these, they can go no where else for better guides, or for more godly and better edification. Many others go, out of prejudice against the Minister or Church people, or out of partiality and favour to that way of praying and preaching; or out of a delight in novelty, and a strange kind of discipline: and many others out of far worse motives, which prove a notorious shame and scandal to those persons who are guided by such base unworthy dispositions, the bare mention whereof may be sufficient to startle them, without any further consideration. Great numbers of people, too, are unwarily drawn away to their meetings, by the fair speeches and cunning craftiness of their leaders, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, speaking evil of the Established Church and Clergy, and extravagantly commending themselves and their way, as if no people had any sense of religion, or were in the right way to heaven, besides their followers. But pray, what is there peculiarly belonging to their principles or practices, which more immediately tendeth to promote true religion and the salvation of mankind, than can be obtained in the Established Church? Do they follow the institution of
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Christ and the holy Apostles, in sending forth ministers to baptize and preach the Gospel? why, they dare not pretend so much as to have a regular ordination of ministers, called and sent forth in the ordinary way of the Christian Church; but pretend to what no one knows any thing of, nor is it apparent in the nature of things, viz. *To an inward call of the Holy Spirit*; which is as notorious and audacious an imposture as can be, if not a downright blasphemy—a word that is spoken against the Holy Ghost; as indeed the impious pretences to the inward aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit, in praying and preaching *extempore*, are egregiously false and conceited, and consequently, their principles and doctrines cannot be the dictates of the Holy Ghost.

To support this fantastic way, we may imagine, by this inward call they pretend some how, or in some manner, to be moved by the Holy Ghost: Now, I allow Almighty God hath granted that favour to mankind; because, as the Apostle St. Peter tells us, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;” but that was altogether supernatural, upon some very urgent and extraordinary occasions: to say men are now moved to act or speak by an immediate power of the Holy Spirit, must be denied, because

cause contrary to the order of Divine providence, and the present system of the Gospel dispensation; since Almighty God hath so fully and perfectly revealed his will to mankind by his Son Jesus Christ and the blessed Apostles. Wherefore it must appear very disingenuous and incongruous for any authors or persons, to propagate the like opinions of an inward call, of being moved by the Holy Ghost, or resisting the motions of the Holy Spirit; which are thoughtless, vulgar errors. Let them be candidly and truly examined, and I shall insist upon all such notions to be groundless and false, without any foundation from Scripture, reason, or experience. Observe—consider well—What I affirm is fact; and I fear not, in the most public manner, to declare the whole truth, though it be a great slur upon most of our very learned and great authors; but I speak it, not with any reproachful design, only on account such dangerous notions and vulgar errors should be eternally blotted out of all authors, and banished from the Christian system; because teeming full (if I may be allowed the expression) of so many mischievous and fatal consequences to the faith and practice of Christian people.

'Tis true, some of the teachers of Methodism have been sent in the ordinary way ; but that not being sufficient to vindicate their apostacy, and setting up for new lights, they pretend likewise to an inward call, and an immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit, without being able to give any true evidence or extraordinary sign of such a divine mission. I am sure they must be extremely wicked who carry on such horrid impostures; and those persons are very ignorant, deluded, or weak, who can believe them. Why, there's no miracle in the thing : One sign, they will tell you, of being true preachers sent of God, is, that they convert and reform many sinners, such as common swearers, drunkards, fornicators, and others ; therefore they dubb themselves the Regenerate, the Converted, the Justified, the Sanctified, the Saved, the true Saints of God ; and the rest of the world, the Unregenerate and Wicked, going to hell with their eyes wide open, or asleep in the devil's arms ! These are characters good enough for the best of Christians, who scorn to go from Church to herd with their societies.

Now I grant, they may terrify some people, and work them out of their sinful courses, by taking upon them to prejudge their future state

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and condition ; telling such of the threats and torments of hell fire, and that they are eternally damned, if they are not regenerate, and follow their teaching : But this is no true sign of their being teachers sent of God, or do preach by the Spirit ; I assure you, 'tis the direct contrary : others can work upon the passions of illiterate people by such horrid denunciations, as well as they can, continually sounding the thunder of damnation in their ears ; but such terrible threatenings are not becoming preachers of the Gospel, which enjoins us to be of a far different temper and spirit. The Gospel teacheth heavenly dispositions and affections ; it allures and draws men to the love of God and goodness by the cords of a man, by the most gracious and merciful offers of pardon and forgiveness of sins ; and not by affrighting men into religion, by the terrors of damnation, with the Devil in hell fire. Such a reformation proceedeth from no good, true principle ; not from the love of virtue, or the fear and obedience due to God. So the poet speaks :

*Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore ;
Oderunt peccare mali, formidine pœnæ.*

But again, supposing they may work a reformation upon their hearers from better motives,
yet

yet it can never be doubted, but that they draw men into as great, or far greater, sins, by their preaching, than they reform them from; as, the sins of spiritual pride and presumption, assuring themselves of salvation; the sin of uncharitableness, condemning and despising others; into a schism and separation from their Church brethren, leaving their true guides to go and hear false teachers; making a wilful breach of that solemn vow and covenant they made with God in their baptism; disannulling their faith and allegiance with the Church, the sin of apostacy, like that of the fallen angels, who kept not their first state; sins of the most diabolical and dangerous nature to their souls, deliberately contracted against the light of reason and the more glorious light of the Gospel, very destructive and prejudicial to the soul, which corrupt the will and disorder the understanding.

Now, Enthusiasm more immediately encourageth mankind to make light of, and to trifle with, the Holy Spirit; and persons of all denominations, now-a-days, seem to take vast delight to traduce irreverently, and slanderously to profane, the sacred name and authority of that holy Being: but men had best take care not to charge God foolishly, to think or speak reproach-

fully and falsely, (according to their own senseless imaginations,) concerning that heavenly Being; "For our God is a consuming fire;" and such is a most horrid and grievous sin, which ought seriously to be considered as productive of all Enthusiasm; and every Enthusiast, in some measure or other, is guilty of slandering and blaspheming that holy Spirit of Truth, which I mention as a good caution to prevent all groundless and irreverent notions concerning the Holy Spirit, as such inconsistent opinions are too common among Christians—sins of a spiritual, much more depraved and corrupt nature, which have not the infirmities and weaknesses of bodily lusts and affections to plead in their behalf: From all which premises there can be no clearer demonstration, that these forward emissaries, pretending to the Spirit, are no teachers sent of God, let them carry themselves with never so much outward holiness or exemplariness of life; because they are setting up altar against altar, the Tabernacle against the Church; whilst some are staunch followers of W—l—y, others of Wh—t—ld; some are sticklers for the Moravian way, or what not! Consider them all in a true light, and here is an unbounded prospect of divisions, tearing Religion and Christianity asunder; and though every Separatist differs from another, they are all so filled

filled up with the Spirit, that every one is sure to be in the right way to heaven and happiness; in which blessed regions of eternal peace and love it is utterly impossible for such outrageous, uncharitable spirits, and such wide dissensions, to subsist together: it is equally natural and just to suppose, if men will not be Christians, to unite and covenant with Christ the Head of the Church, but separate from him here on earth, they must never expect to reign with him in glory hereafter. Hence it is plain, these preachers, who are the most arrogant pretenders to the Spirit, instead of promoting the fellowship and doctrine of the Gospel, are most industrious in doing the work and business of the Devil, propagating uncharitableness, melancholy, despair, or presumption, the effects of Enthusiasm; with bitter envyings and debates, heresies in departing from the true faith, and schisms in separating from the Church.

The examples and behaviour of all their sullen followers do notoriously and evidently confirm the truth of these assertions; by all which we may assuredly gather, that they have nothing of the Spirit of God or the Gospel principles belonging to them, which contain the fruits of eternal truth, love, unity, peace and concord; and tho' they may demurely carry on a fair and plausible outside

outside of religion, nevertheless, 'tis no wonder if they prove the worst of impostors, as St. Paul remarks, 2 Cor. ii. 13, &c. "For such are false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of light: therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." Wherefore I leave it to the consideration of all men, whether it be not more safe and commendable to adhere to the true pastors and doctrines of the Established Church, under which they have been brought up, to lead peaceable and quiet lives, in all godliness and honesty; than to be the greatest Saint or Apostle in their fantastic way, under the delusions of Enthusiasm, abandoned to melancholy, despair, or presumption, or misled in their faith and practice by false and blasphemous notions concerning the inward motions of the Holy Ghost. In short, mankind are strangely possessed with unaccountable fantastic notions concerning God's Holy Spirit; inso-much as to make me concerned, nay ashamed, to find so much ignorance and arrogance among Christians, who esteem themselves the most knowing and religious people in the world.

Lastly,

Lastly, consider all teachers of Enthusiasm as the vilest and worst of impostors; being deceived, deceiving others; while some within the Church, but multitudes without, are preaching up false and strange doctrines, destructive errors, and blasphemous notions concerning the holy Spirit of God; rendering that eternal Spirit of Truth the most ridiculous, contemptible: pleading his assistance for their vile imaginations; who are miserably deluded, conceited, puffed up with the spirit of impurity, leading others into the same pit and snare of destruction. Now, the Lord have mercy on such, or they must undoubtedly perish in their errors!

Give me leave to assure all good people, that those too common notions concerning the inward aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit—the immediate teaching of the Spirit, as the Quakers boast—the inward teaching of the Spirit, which Enthusiasts pretend to—the strange convictions or conversions wrought by the Spirit on the souls of men—receiving the Holy Spirit, and resisting his motions—are egregiously false and absurd doctrines, the very basis and foundation of all Enthusiasm; particularly that monstrous and impious tenet of the indwelling of the holy Spirit:

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They are senseless, unworthy notions, contrary to the honour of God, to the design of holy writ, to the dignity of the Christian religion, to the principles of uncorrupt reason, and to the universal experience of mankind. And granting the assertors of these notions could produce twice the cube of 10,000 volumes in favour of such doctrines, they would prove of no weight or force at all ; because it will evidently appear, they rest upon no authority, but are mere imaginary, senseless delusions, void of reason and revelation, the bane of religion.

Now, it is most astonishing to me, that people should be so void of understanding, as to bestow gifts for Mr. W—l—y to build tabernacles, wherein to propagate his enthusiastic errors and false doctrines among the people, deceiving the hearts of the simple : Better that all the contributors, the tabernacles, and W—l—y, with a millstone about his neck, were drowned in the depth of the sea ; than that such multitudes should perish thro' their vain imaginations and wicked devices, offending the brethren, and leading believers in Christ out of their right knowledge. Others are equally as bad, who are any ways countenancing and encouraging such pernicious doctrines and horrid effusions to be preached up as the infallible truths

truths of the Gospel: whilst both the teachers and hearers set aside reason and revelation, to believe a lie, blaspheming the holy Spirit of Truth. For God worketh not in us by means of his Spirit, since all inspiration hath actually ceased for near seventeen hundred years; and his grace is conveyed to us instrumentally, by a standing revelation, a more universal, infallible method of instruction and edification, than if ten thousand persons should rise from the dead, and preach to the world: for if men hear not the words of the Son of God and his blessed Apostles, neither will they be persuaded, though innumerable messengers from the dead should preach to them. Such appearances would prove most ridiculous, contemptible to libertines, and to those prepossessed with imaginary notions of the inward aids and motions of the Spirit; to all such, a standing revelation will appear trifling, ineffectual.

There are so many notorious errors and inconsistent doctrines concerning the holy Spirit, promoted among Christians, that a considering person would be apt to imagine Christian knowledge consisted of nothing but chimerical notions; that men had banished the revealed principles of the Gospel; and that nought else but Enthusiasm was true religion. It is certain, God conveyeth

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not his grace to us in visions or dreams, or in any other ways, as was usual with the Jews ; nor doth he send inspired men or Angels to guide us ; since he hath finally so perfectly revealed himself, and spoken unto us by his well-beloved Son and the blessed Apostles, on whose doctrines alone all Christians must depend for divine aid and instruction so long as the world endureth, and not on any inward teachings of the Spirit.

Wherefore consider further, the danger of Enthusiasm lieth in being deceived with senseless, unaccountable notions of receiving the Holy Ghost, of the inward teaching of the Spirit, of being led by the Spirit, and such like ; that they who fall into errors concerning the Holy Spirit, are not guided by it, but are taken captive by the Father of Lies.

Now, observe again, the dangerous consequences of becoming Enthusiasts—Such people are ever distracted about religion, and are never in their right knowledge ; they strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel ; they either grow melancholy, fall into a false extreme, or despair ; from a coolness about religion into a raging madness ; they are blown up of the Spirit into all manner of presumption, spiritual pride, and uncharitableness ;

ness; when instead of being in the way of salvation, they carry the cause of their own damnation within their breasts; that is, (in truth) execrable errors, and inexcusable lying against the Holy Ghost.

All persons who pray or preach *extempore*, by a pretended inward direction of the holy Spirit, address the eternal God with an abominable lie in their mouths; they wound the souls of their Christian brethren, by causing them to err, and trust in their false enthusiastic doctrines. Therefore it greatly behoveth all people, who would shew any regard to the welfare and salvation of their own souls, to beware of such dangerous doctrines, particularly to avoid all persons who persuade and teach those impious notions concerning the holy Spirit, which tend to confusion and destruction; because they who do teach and follow Enthusiasm, serve not God, but their own lusts, deceiving their own hearts.

Let no one, therefore, at the peril of his soul, harbour any false and lying thoughts in his mind concerning the Holy Ghost: and far be it from every Christian, wilfully or knowingly to teach any thing untrue, to speak any derogatory and lying words of that holy and eternal Being. For

our blessed Saviour saith, Luke xii. 10. "Who-
soever shall speak a word against the Son of man,
it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blas-
phemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be
forgiven." Wherefore let all men wisely keep
a strict guard against that unpardonable sin. So
be it.

Next I shall offer these general observations
and useful hints to the public : That as we are
born and brought up in a Christian community,
under the establishment of a primitive, pure, and
episcopal ministry, founded upon principles agree-
able to the true Gospel institution; it will ap-
pear to be the greatest degree of irreligion, pro-
phaneness, and impiety, for any considerate, con-
scientious person, wilfully to transgress this di-
vine Christian discipline, the regular orders and
subscriptions of the Church.—Still more tremen-
dous, to encourage and appoint low, illiterate
mechanics, and women, in a sacrilegious manner,
to enter upon the sacred offices, to pray and
preach, not being apostolically called and sent
forth as the ambassadors of Christ; but directly
in opposition to divine and human authority, upon
no better a title than a notorious imposture and
cheat; and moreover, under a pretence of the
inward teaching of the holy Spirit, to deliver for
sacred

sacred and divine truths, many erroneous, execrable notions, with vain repetitions, the brain-sick ferment of enthusiastic effusions; bellowing forth numberless expressions, illogical, ungrammatical, senseless, and incoherent, void of truth and reason! But granting they could all preach *extempore* in the most elegant manner, their discourses could never be of such universal use and advantage to the Christian world as well-composed and printed sermons: the one serves only for the present audience, where scarce the one half of what is said can be thoroughly digested or remembered; but learned and printed discourses do serve to instruct several nations and ages of Christians, and therefore must be abundantly more edifying than *extempore* sermons, how well soever they may be delivered: and had not the Apostles charged their doctrines to be read in the Churches, the Christian religion would scarce have gained footing in the world, or stood longer than their own lives, much less have continued to these ages.

Men cannot pretend to any great good by *extempore* effusions. This, and much more, you who are curious may observe, and, what you'll find to be undeniable, that the principal leaders of Methodism have been doing these many years;
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abusing the world, and their hearers too, with impious, false doctrines, concerning the holy Spirit, as if no other means than what they teach could be so effectual to men's salvation; chousing them out of their understandings, and then creeping in with them to prey upon their fortunes; calling up every aid to their assistance, to praise themselves, in the most superlative manner, for true apostles and ministers of Christ, and, as much as possible, to run down the real dignity and merit of the Church and Clergy; to set up the most illiterate mechanics to pray and preach *extempore*, as far superior and preferable to all exercises the Clergy can perform; (which must necessarily rival or ruin the Church to all intents and purposes;) attempting to fix religion upon a false basis, entirely to subvert the true primitive means; and bring the written word, as well as the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel, into the utmost contempt:—Certainly a most audacious and impious scheme, to oppose the Established Church with might and main, to lay it level with the dust beneath your feet! Can any thing be more inglorious? But still, nothing is so vain and foolish, as an attempt to found another, conformable to their new plan, which may in any degrees come near to the present.—A revolution by no means advantageous, agreeable!—Wherefore,

fore, I humbly propose (in the most dutiful manner) to the legislative powers, when it shall seem meet, First, to make an example of Tabernacle-preachers, by enacting a law to cut out their tongues, who have been the incorrigible authors of so many mischiefs and distractions throughout the English dominions : And, by the said authority, to cut out the tongues of all Field Teachers, and Preachers in houses, barns, or elsewhere, without Apostolical ordination and legal authority, being approved and licensed, to enter upon that most sacred trust, most solemn office. And I dare affirm, such an easy and condign punishment will make the Enthusiasts to become better Christians and better subjects : for it will not be in their power (having lost those horrid, abusive weapons) to slander, blaspheme, and ridicule the divine Spirit of Truth ; nor will they be able to seduce and mislead their Christian brethren : Instead of *extempore*, vain effusions, they may pray inwardly, most fervently and devoutly, or much better by composed forms ; neither can they ever in the like manner turn religion into fanaticism, or disturb the good order and peaceable settlement of the Church.

Again, they would be much better subjects ; for thereby they would not be hindered, as mechanics,

chanics, from following their several handicraft trades and occupations ; they would be more orderly and peaceable at home, being prevented from gadding abroad, and neglecting their proper employments ; once being cured of that elastic, voluble part of Enthusiasm, they could not mispend their days, and all others who go to hear them ; but in an honest industry and calling would be better able, in the mean time, to support themselves and families, and do more good to the community ; they would become more dutiful and obedient to their lawful pastors and governors, there not being the like temptations to draw them aside : The whole kingdom, too, would be secured from many of those dangerous riots and frequent disturbances, which those wild enthusiastical teachers have been the real incendiaries, the promoters of ; and who, in all probability, may be the instigators of rebellion in the end, (if not timely prevented,) as acting under the cloak of religion, both against human and divine authority. For, ask such mechanics, who sent them to preach the Gospel ? They cannot say, without a notorious, horrid lie, that God sent them : For he doth not send them, either in the ordinary or extraordinary way ; and 'tis plain, the government doth not send them ; but the enemies of peace and truth, who support their mission,

mission, do : and therefore let no one think it severity or persecution, for such abominable, false, and blasphemous tongues to be cut out, so as they can never more execute their mischievous, horrid designs, to promote pernicious, abusive errors ; or to establish licentious, illegal practices ; and under the pretended teaching of the Holy Spirit, to undermine our Church, and overturn our glorious constitution.

These are only some few of those peculiar advantages which may redound to the public from so salutary a law ; which can bring no hurt upon individuals, but will reduce those Enthusiasts into obedience, who now trample upon the laws with impunity ; and will effectually suppress that epidemical infection, which threateneth the welfare and prosperity of our happy establishment, and may in time effect its ruin. For observe, as Enthusiasm intoxicates the brains of the middle and lower class of people, who are joined and supported by some rich and great persons ; when they become a head too great for the body politic, can it be supposed they would be more tame and gentle than they were under the Oliverian usurpation ? Though now an inconsiderable minority, yet they prove it so in very deed. We are they that ought to speak : Who are lords

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over us? Will any thing less than a rebellion succeed, and crush down all before it? Every honest discerning man may see, and dread the consequences of Enthusiasts, under the new name of Methodists. 'Tis time to be forewarned and forearmed. As the late grand rebellion made its rise and progress under the specious form of reformation and greater purity in religion; so truly, what nearer approaches can these present Enthusiasts make, towards anarchy and confusion, when, under pretence of religion, every upstart innovator dares publicly to propagate most pernicious errors, and overturn the sacred bonds of fidelity, truth, and obedience. The rest I shall leave to your judgment and consideration to animadvert upon, as leisure will permit; hoping these observations may prove acceptable and useful to the community.



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A P P E N D I X,
O R
A D D E N D A:

- W H E R E I N
SOME FORMER CONSIDERATIONS
Are further explained and proved.

The whole, for Substance, though concise, is a full and eternal Confutation of all Enthusiasm and Fanaticism; striking up, by the Root those false and senseless Opinions of *extempore* praying and preaching by the inward Direction of the Holy Spirit—of stinting the Holy Spirit in Prayer—and the inward teaching of the Spirit;—these being proved to be groundless and absurd Opinions: Wherefore it appears, Men cannot pray more devoutly than by a well-digested, composed Form of Prayers, which is much better than all the pretended Effusions of the Spirit; and it is very plain, the same Person cannot teach or instruct an understanding Auditory, to so good Purpose, in an *extempore* Manner, as he may by a considerate, well-composed Discourse. This appears by all Experience.

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A D D E N D A

W H E R E I N

SOME FORMER CONSIDERATIONS

Are further explained and proved.

The whole for substance, though concise, is a
full and eternal continuation of all the former
the Reader, looking up by the Root those
the said former Opinions of former days.
ing and pressing by the inward Direction of
the Holy Spirit, or finding the Holy Spirit
in Prayer—and the inward teaching of the
Spirit;—this being proved to be grounded
and solid Opinions: Wherefore it appears
that cannot pay more devoutly than by a
well digested, corrected Form of Prayer,
which is much better than all the pretended
Fictions of the Spirit; and it is very plain
the same Father cannot teach or instruct as
understanding Authority, to so good Purpose
as an unwearied Minister, as he may by a con-
stant, well disposed Disciple. This is
true by all Reason.

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APPENDIX, &c.

IN the foregoing Treatise, my Friend, it is plainly observable, that I maintain the Gospel Grace and Divine Assistance in its most true and genuine purity, grounded upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone: On this I build my Christian knowledge, faith, and practice; this is the only Grace of God that we know of; that divine Grace which bringeth salvation, and hath appeared to all men; the same which Christ commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach to every creature. And of this we are certain, Almighty God doth thus communicate his grace, or divine aid, to our souls, in such a manner as is best suited and adapted to all the rational faculties and powers of embodied Spirits,

Spirits, whom he hath created and united to these earthly tabernacles in such a strict conjunction and wonderful order, as to acquire all the impressions that furnish the mind with knowledge, understanding, and reasoning : Hence all the natural capacities of our souls are stored from the ideas of sensation and reflection, as the judicious and learned Mr. Locke hath clearly demonstrated : and whosoever teacheth any other divine grace or assistance, than what is derived to our souls from the precepts and motives of the Gospel, teacheth a new kind of revelation, somewhat very extraordinary and supernatural, above the common means of *Nature*, and *Grace* too ; and what, I am bold to assert, has never been proved true in fact, or by any experience, since those miraculous aids which were granted to the inspired Apostles : and therefore we may safely look upon all pretended motions, inward aids, or immediate suggestions of the Holy Spirit in men, to be most pernicious and detestable errors ; as indeed they are false and groundless, the mere conceits of Fanatics and Enthusiasts ; contrary to that grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ ; contradictory to the nature of things, i. e. to all the external means of the Gospel, to the natural powers and faculties of human souls, to fact and experience, and to the universal evidence and testimony

mony of Scripture. We know the contrary to be universally true in fact and by common experience, that our souls are informed, directed, and assisted, in our most secret thoughts and purposes, by hearing and reading the unerring instructions of the word of God, and by duly meditating thereon ; all the powers of reason are very much enlightened and improved by this sublime light of revelation, as also by conversing with good men, with useful and religious books : and to attribute or think, that every sudden motion or good thought which comes into our minds, can be nothing else but an immediate influence or inward suggestion of the Holy Spirit, is very inconsistent, absurd, and senseless ; when we are infallibly assured, they proceed from the natural powers and faculties of our own souls, assisted by these ordinary means of grace ; when at the same time we cannot be assured, on the other hand, that they are the immediate suggestions or inward aids of the Holy Spirit ; nor can any motions in our souls be proved such, either by facts or experience : as if our souls were wholly evil, incapable of a good thought or motion, but what the Holy Spirit must be supposed to dart on the sudden into our minds ; and as if there were really no other knowledge, truth, or grace, possible in the nature of things : But when all matters relating

lating to this senseless notion are thoroughly considered, it will appear an opinion impossible to be true, without a miracle. Our souls are not so barren and depraved, as to be void of all good thoughts, intentions, and resolutions; utterly incapable of exerting our reasonable faculties, of embracing truth and avoiding error: for then would the great Author of our beings have given us our senses, and all those noble faculties of our souls, in vain: And if we can form good thoughts to ourselves, (as certainly no reasonable person can deny,) then we attribute these inward aids and suggestions to the Holy Spirit, without any foundation of truth, and to no purpose; and talk very inconsistently of ourselves, or other persons, having experience of the inward aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit—as many do. And, upon due consideration, I am much surpris'd that men of learning should attempt to produce any part of Scripture, to support an opinion so contrary to grace, and subversive of all former revelations, as well as destructive to the natural abilities and rational powers of our souls;—an opinion, I may say, inconsistent with the nature of things, and that hath no foundation either grounded upon reason or Scripture.

The strongest hold the assertors of this opinion have, depends upon some few texts of Scripture, understood in a wrong sense, and very badly applied. One or two of the principal, and of the greatest stress, being briefly considered, will give great light against all that can be alledged for the Spirit, or any pretences to the inward operations of the Holy Ghost. I find these are most usually urged in defence of this great and vulgar error: Luke xi. 13. and Philip. ii. 13. But these, duly considered, will be very far from giving the least support or advantage to a principle so pernicious to Christianity—a principle that infatuateth the mind, nay, encourageth the most illiterate and undiscerning persons vainly to presume, that every religious thought or imagination that comes to the mind, is an immediate gift, an inward aid of the Holy Spirit; under which influence they pretend themselves to be duly authorized to perform the ministerial duties of praying and preaching to others, guiding and teaching them by the inward motions of the Spirit;—not of the Holy Spirit, is most certain. Here is a door opened wide enough for the most licentious thoughts and imaginary delusions, to ravage the world without controul, under the supposed direction of the Holy Spirit; though not being

able to give the least proof or demonstration of the Spirit, or its power : and thus all the world must be for ever imposed upon, without any possibility of redress ; which we find by daily experience to be of the most dangerous consequence to the honour of God, the peace of the Church, the welfare of religion, and the salvation of men's souls.

After all that may be proved, there needeth not a more evident demonstration than this universal plain matter of fact, to shew, that the inward aid and teaching of the Spirit is an opinion of the most pernicious and dangerous tendency to the Christian religion ; a doctrine notoriously groundless and erroneous ; so far inconsistent with truth, that it cannot be verified in the least, or so much as proved by any preternatural evidences in those that pretend to assert such inward aids, nor by the testimony of Scripture, reason, or experience :—A doctrine that Mr. W—l-y, and such teachers, have been industriously endeavouring to impose upon the world, mightily labouring to corrupt the minds of Christians, striving greatly to oppose the ordinary means and grace of salvation, and to bring the holy Scriptures into the utmost contempt, through the pretended inward teaching of the Spirit ; and to enforce it
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the more readily into their hearers minds, they boldly assert, Whoever has it not, is eternally damned: whereby the very life and spirit of Christianity is banished out of the world, the true doctrine of the Gospel lies buried under the inward rubbish and corrupt principles of men's vain conceits:—A doctrine, so pregnant of mischiefs, so full of imaginary delusions, and of so slender authority, that nothing but weak minds and vulgar prejudices can ever support it:—A doctrine, I may be bold to say, which has been the real cause of as great errors, heresies, schisms and distractions in the Christian world, through every century of the Church, as any can be thought, or the enemies of Scripture can make any advantage on.

To verify my assertion, I need not ransack Popish or other Christian countries, which are allowed more corrupt than our own; but our late times of Fanaticism and Enthusiasm, since the Reformation, do abundantly testify; our present times, to our great sorrow and concern, do confirm this fact; we may every day see and experience in those various dissensions and changes wrought among Fanatics, which spread and gain ground by the several teachers of Methodism and Enthusiasm—the very basis and principle of all their

wild delusions : For so long as the inward motions, operations, aids, or teachings of the Holy Spirit, are maintained by men, or any such false and malignant principles ; so long must the Christian world be distracted with new and upstart sectaries, new teachers, new inspirations, with eternal feuds and innovations, according as the ignorant disposition or evil genius of men's corrupt inclinations lead them. This is that Spirit of Antichrist, which hath ever disturbed the peace of the Church with Gnostic tenets and corrupt practices ; and must for ever subvert its members with false notions and impious delusions ; 'till men build their Christian faith and obedience upon the written word alone, and not upon any pretences to the Spirit. And for the truth of this general observation, I appeal to the universal experience and observation of all men. Search the history of all ages ; view the real source of all the present distractions among Christians ; and you will find this to be the great cause of the many evils and miseries which infect the Church, as clear and certain as any mathematical demonstration.

The Quakers, too, maintain the inward teaching of the Spirit to be the basis of their religion ; —a principle as contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel,

Gospel, as light to darkness ; and can there be a more obstinate, ignorantly blind, and enthusiastic sect, more absurd in point of Christianity, than they ? Was this principle true, the world might fairly bid adieu to the Gospel revelation ; and, false as it is, it would strangely gain ground, especially in these loose, corrupt times, when there are so many pretenders to new light and the Spirit, which have ever been the firebrands of dissention and corruption in the Christian Church, especially with persons of conceited imaginations and enthusiastic dispositions ; were it not for the stand which the ministers of the Established Church have always made against the spirit of Fanaticism and Ethusiasm : And, among others, I am persuaded this Treatise will be highly instrumental in destroying these strong holds of Satan, and giving the greatest blow to Ethusiasm, tearing up by the roots these vain pretences to the inward aids of the Spirit.

Let all serious, devout Christians, attentively consider what illeffects have proceeded from this cause, and use their endeavours to stop the torrent of such erroneous principles, so pernicious to the Christian religion in general, and so ruinous to men's souls in particular. Let them shun the delusion, and abhor the real cause of so great
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miserics to the Church. Let them consider, these pretences to the inward gifts of the Spirit, were condemned by the orthodox Bishops in the councils of Aquileia and Hierapolis, the first that Ecclesiastical History informs us of, since that of the Apostles at Jerusalem, mentioned in the Acts; which demonstrates, how false and odious such opinions were esteemed, and how little credit ought to be given to such delusions: Though I am verily persuaded, there is scarce any one branch of the Christian Church, at this time, which is not tainted somewhat more or less with this inward flame of Enthusiasm, which hath spread its pernicious influence and spiritual delusion through every part of the Christian world, even to the subversion of the Gospel in most parts of Asia and Africa, as well as in many places throughout Europe and America. I fear, too, were it carefully examined, the distemper would prove ruinous, almost epidemical, universal! The infatuation has been so great, as easily to be traced through every part and æra of the Church.

This my endeavour is to undeceive the world in a concern of the utmost moment and importance to the peace and welfare of the universal Church; to rectify the mistaken notions, and to banish the most dangerous and destructive errors,
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from the minds of men—the pretences to the inward motions and operations of the Holy Spirit—the very worst of evils, that Spirit of Antichrist foretold in the Gospel, so full of all deceivableness and lying wonders. Take a right view in what direction you please, and you will find this hath ever been one grand cause of the great evils and sufferings of the Church of Christ; the very poison that hath brought the most terrible convulsions and agonies of death upon it. View but mankind, ever raving and distracted under this enthusiastic frenzy of the inward aids of the Spirit; the Quaker, inwardly mad, and wretchedly blind with the light *within*; the Methodist, visibly so too; and the greatest part of the Christian world really infected, according as they are more or less intoxicated with this foul spirit of delusion, productive of the most infernal mischiefs—a principle the most pernicious, absurd, and erroneous, that ever was broached by the enemies of Scripture and reason, to blast their authority, and ravelly to give up the use of both, to the inward aids of the Spirit. 'Tis like a contagious, pestilential distemper, which corrupts the air we breathe in, and no remedy to be found against its mortal venom; but wherever the contagion spreads its influence, there the infection seizes

seizes multitudes, and carries off all orders and degrees of men, like another universal deluge.

That Almighty God, so far as he is pleased, can communicate his will, may reveal himself to his creature man, I deny not; because he hath already done that in the most effectual manner, by the most fit and agreeable means the nature of man was capable of, in the most endearing and wonderful instance of his love and goodness to all mankind, by his blessed Son Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Ghost given to his holy Apostles, so far surpassing all other revelations, as to supersede the necessity of any other communications by his Spirit, and to render all other aids, by internal motions and operations, entirely needless, to be taken for mere imposture and delusion. And therefore, to think that God's Spirit acts upon our souls, by any internal impulses, motions, or suggestions, inward aids or assistances whatsoever, is erroneous and absurd; because contrary to the ordinary means of God's conveying his grace to all mankind; contrary to the nature and constitution of human souls, which God hath created to be acted upon, according to the order and principles of nature, by the interposition, mediation, and affection of their bodily senses: and that they are so acted upon, by the
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natural and ordinary means of grace, and not by any inward impulses, is a fact so notorious and self-evident, from the principles of nature and common experience, that no reasonable or considerate person can be ignorant of its certainty. And therefore, let the matter be put to this fair trial, and the consequence be observed, that no person can truly say, that any good thought or purpose, which may arise in his mind, is the immediate gift of God, the inward operation or suggestion of his Holy Spirit; any more than he can experimentally say, that any one evil thought and vicious purpose, is the immediate instigation, inward motion and suggestion of the Devil: Because we assuredly know, and are convinced, that the one is the certain effect of God's word, assisting our reason; as the other is owing to the universal depravity and corruption of our nature.

Our words and actions are the effects and offsprings of our thoughts; as they are the main springs and movers set on work by the rational soul or mind, from the several ideas and perceptions of the senses; these form the understanding, which has the ordering and direction of the will, and determines its freedom of chusing and acting. Hence our actions, proceeding from these natural motions of the will, are either mo-

rally good or evil, and denominate them to be the actions of the whole man, compounded of soul and body : But whatever thoughts or actions are immediately effected by any other cause, above or beside the natural powers of soul and body—as, suppose, by the divine impulse and inward teaching of the Spirit—such thoughts or actions are undeniably the effects of divine power, and not the effects of human agency ; and are no more the thoughts and actions of a man, than those very thoughts and actions can be denominated the thoughts and actions of an irrational brute. Hence appears the notorious absurdity and contrariety of Enthusiasm, with the spirit of God and human nature ; and wherever that Spirit prevails, there can be nothing but disorder and confusion. This appears true in fact, and by all experience,

But further, to shew the inconsistency and weak grounds of such pretences, let me ask, why the most learned, even the very best of men, upon all spiritual occasions, consult the word of God and his ministers, good books and good men ; which, if they had the inward aids and assistances of the Spirit to direct them, would be very affronting to the Spirit, and utterly inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God : But because these

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are the only helps and ordinary means to inform our understandings, and to regulate our practice; therefore it is natural and necessary to have recourse to them, when there is no dependance can be laid on the other. To suppose that the Holy Spirit is the immediate author of our good thoughts, or the Devil the instigator of our evil thoughts, is destroying the very essential powers of the human soul, to make man neither an accountable nor a rational creature; neither capable of doing good or evil, of his own free power and ability; and by consequence, in strict justice, neither rewardable or punishable for those his good or evil actions, which cannot properly be derived from his own rational and free powers. Besides, the very best thoughts that can possibly come into our minds, we may naturally experience in ourselves, to arise from the improvement of the rational faculties and active powers of our souls; our imperfect knowledge and understanding being assisted and directed by the external and ordinary means of grace. This is so well known to those who have had experience, and made good improvement in their understanding, that they have done more good to mankind, by founding of schools and colleges for the improvement of learning and knowledge, by giving of premiums for the encouragement of arts and sciences,

than can be supposed by the aids of the Spirit; and therefore is become the general practice of the world.

Hence it is the great care and desire of parents, to insil, betimes, good principles into their children, that they may come to know and practise (as they grow up) that which is good, and take delight in morality and good manners. Good thoughts, we know, are, in general, the effects of a virtuous and Christian education. Mankind are not grown so senseless, in these cases, as to depend upon the inward aids of the Spirit, which, if at any time, appear most necessary under a total want of all other good instructions;—and they are not to be attained by any other means than by his inward suggestions! Wherefore, on due consideration, we must look upon such pretences to be groundless and irrational.

But again, for any one to say, such good thoughts, as may sometimes come into mind, are the immediate operations and suggestions of the Holy Spirit, internally wrought on the soul, is what no one can ever be assured of; and for this reason—Because no one can ever experimentally perceive such in himself, by any preternatural impressions or effects whatsoever; nor can any

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one ever give any certain proofs or evidences of the inward aids and assistances of the Spirit to others ; because all our thoughts, good as well as evil, are the internal operations of our own minds, and are acquired by means of those various and external impressions made on our souls by natural causes : and whatever comes to our minds, by any other channel than the ideas of sensation and reflection, must be supernatural, the effects of some superior cause ; and were our thoughts to be internally suggested, or imprinted on our souls, by any superior agents—as, for example, by the Spirit—and not through the in-lets of our senses, they could no more be said properly to be our thoughts, but the thoughts of that superior power or agency, which first conceived, ordered, and effected them in our minds. Now this is undoubtedly the case, when a man communicates or discovers any particular knowledge or invention to *others* : being thus made known to *them*, it is not primarily by *their own* operation brought to light ; but is the effect of some other cause, viz. of him who first communicated the matter to them. In like manner, the repute and credit of any new discovery, in all arts and sciences, is justly attributed to the first author or inventor ; even as the thoughts of the heart, when they are communicated to us, are not properly to be called

our own, because derived to our minds, tho' it be by the in-lets of our senses; much less were our ways or thoughts effected by the inward motions of the Holy Spirit: for if that be granted to have any such operation, it would necessarily follow, that whatever is effected by such means, is not man's ways, or man's thoughts, but God's, the impulse of the Spirit: So the Apostles' preaching the new doctrine of the Gospel, and writing the Scriptures of the New Testament, was not the word of man, and the writing of their own conceptions; but the word and the express dictates of the Holy Spirit; for all which good thoughts, or works, the reason and will of man is quite out of the question; and so no man can be said to work out his own salvation "with fear and trembling," if God thus worketh in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

But I have shewed above, that this is not the manner of God's dealing with man; and that no more is intended therein, than that Almighty God, of his own good pleasure, was freely pleased to give us the means of grace, to assist us in our knowledge of his will, and to direct us in our faith of Christ, and obedience to the Son of God. It was no merit on man's part; but God's free grace and good pleasure, to give us all those ex-
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ternal means necessary to our salvation; whereby we are enabled to will and to do those things which are pleasing to him.

Verily, for Christian men to teach or think there is any thing more than this implied in that plain text of St. Luke xi. 13. shews how much they are mistaken about the sense of the Spirit; and how frequently it is misapplied, through ignorance, or a prevailing custom to establish the most erroneous, false notions, upon the minds of credulous and injudicious Christians, may be worthy the most serious observation of the learned; nay, to find how frequently this Scripture is brought in at every turn, or laid down as an infallible proof, that nothing can be done in us, but by the immediate help of the Spirit; which mistaken men do imagine, is here assuredly promised to be given to them that ask it of God.

Now, a little due attention to this Scripture will illustrate the matter beyond all manner of doubt or dispute, and prevent many mistakes among Christians for the future, by means of this text being once truly understood. See the strength of the argument in the preceding verses; with the beautiful energy of our blessed Saviour's reasoning, couched in the 13th verse: "If ye then, being

being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?" From hence many are easily induced to believe, that nothing less than the Holy Spirit of God is promised, and actually bestowed upon them that ask him for it ; together with all the immediate effects of the Spirit, in the inward aids, operations, and motions of his all-powerful influence, wrought in our souls. Now, nothing like this is intended here. The Holy Spirit of God doth deliver no such sense, nor any meaning tending to this purpose, when Christ saith, " How much more shall your heavenly Father give the *Holy Spirit* to them that ask him," by a frequent figure or metaphor usual in holy Scripture, (as I before observed.) The Holy Spirit is the *Cause*, put there for the *Effect*, and is not to be understood in a plain literal sense ; but means the gracious effects of the Holy Spirit, the constant and ordinary means of grace, the directions of God's unerring word, the assistance of his ministers, and the use of the sacraments, which are most graciously and freely tendered to mankind by the Gospel. This is the wisdom, which if any man lack, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. If any man wanteth this grace and assistance

assistance of God's Holy Spirit, let him ask it of God's ministers and his holy word; let him seek it there, and knock at the door of his Church, and then this gracious promise is most truly and effectually made good, as it is expressed in ver. 10. "For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

For God to dwell in our hearts, or Christ, or the Holy Ghost, is inconsistent with reason, truth, and revelation; and to say it must be so by means of faith, is certainly as weak a means to help out an impossibility and contradiction, as can be devised: for no reasonable being can possibly have such a faith, as to believe any thing for a truth and matter of fact, which, in its own nature, is contradictory to reason, nay, impossible to be, without overthrowing the attributes and perfections of Almighty God: and, though it be a phrase used in Scripture, the words God, Christ, or the Holy Ghost, are not to be taken strictly, absolutely, and properly, for God; but the Effects of his will, of his word revealed to us, which we, by faith, receive and embrace as the word and will of God. Therefore all those figurative expressions in Scripture, which Enthusiasts do most wretchedly and falsely explain for the indwelling

of the Spirit, the inward teaching, &c. do admit of a very different, easy, and rational interpretation; seeing the Cause is frequently put to express the Effects. The true meaning is, that by faith we naturally embrace and experience the ordinary means of grace, which are all those external effects of the Holy Spirit, imprinted, and no otherwise produced, in our hearts, but by the word of God; for hereby only perceive we the love of God to mankind, and our redemption through Jesus Christ; we come to know the will of God, our duty and obedience to him; we ground our faith in the Son of God, and all our hopes of happiness and glory; we believe in the Holy Ghost, who inspired the Apostles to transmit all such truths to the Church of God, as were necessary for our salvation:—All this, I say, by the external ordinary means of grace only; not by the Holy Spirit, or the inward teaching, as the immediate cause; but by the Effects of the Spirit, derived to us instrumentally thro' the ministers and ministry of God's word, of the holy sacraments, and by the communion of saints holding fellowship with Christ, the Head of the Church. This I humbly apprehend to be the full meaning and import of all those figurative expressions, which the literal interpretation doth expose to the wildest contradictions and confusions; makes
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Scripture manifestly subvert its own authority ; is contrary to the reason and faith of man, to the truth and nature of the Divine Majesty ; and is only serviceable to promote the senseless imaginations of Enthusiasts.

This argument may be further illustrated, by explaining Ephes. iii. 16, 17. " That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, [that is, by the Effects of his Spirit,] that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Now, if any do imagine with themselves, that the spirit, or soul, or person of Christ, doth dwell in their hearts by faith, I say, it is absurd and impossible ; for the spirit, the very soul and person of Christ, is necessarily and essentially co-existent with his glorified presence in heaven, and cannot be separated from himself, as one, all-perfect, incommunicable Being ; nor is it possible for any act or conception of the human mind, to believe Christ to be so present with the faithful, as to dwell in their hearts. For consider—what all the Christian world do mean and understand by Christ, is, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Anointed, and Saviour of the world ; who once, in our nature, revealed the will of God to men on earth ; but is now eternally glorified with his Fa-

ther in heaven: and it is no act of faith can actually so far debase his glorious nature, but it is most highly inconsistent and irrational to imagine, that Christ can dwell in our hearts by *Faith*: for then must Christ be divided, or multiplied, into as many Christs, as there are hearts to dwell in; which is most absurd, and therefore can be no object or act of faith. It is then plainly demonstrable, that what the Holy Spirit of God meaneth by the Apostle in this place, and elsewhere, is, the Effects of Christ—the great transactions wrought by him for our redemption; which are the very express objects and matter propounded by the Holy Spirit to our belief. This we all know, and apprehend by faith only; and a man may as well believe he can swallow a mountain, as believe this Scripture in any other sense than this in which I have explained it.

The Apostle illustrateth this exposition most clearly, in a parallel expression, perfectly agreeable with what is here laid down, where he speaketh to the Colossians, iii. 16. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom.” And to satisfy the most incredulous, or curious, there needeth no other demonstration than that of the same Apostle, 1 Thess. ii. 13. that it is “the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

believe." This undoubtedly proves, it is not the Spirit, but the Word—the Effects of the Spirit; which was the thing I have fully demonstrated. I say further, that the plain meaning of the Holy Spirit, in the several expressions of Scripture, as Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. signifieth no more than the Effects of the Spirit: For it is contradictory to the truth, the wisdom and goodness of God, to propose that as a matter of faith, which is absolutely in itself irrational, absurd, and contrary to the eternal relation and fitness of things.

These weak subterfuges being removed, there will appear no texts of Scripture to favour or support those gross opinions I have here detected and confuted. 'Twas certainly the pride and arrogance of the human mind, that first gave rise to the inward aids of the Spirit; which is observable in those who pretend thereto, that they would be esteemed behind no other Christians in the favour of God, and the gifts of the Spirit; none have that grace, that knowledge, and can edify like them! They do even vie with the inspired Apostles, calling themselves the Enlightened of God, and Spiritual; and the rest of mankind, Ignorant and Carnal: All which is no other than impious delusion and false boasting, contrary

trary to the truth and spirit of the Apostle, Phil. ii. 3. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

Thus I have very briefly considered the inward aids of the Spirit, and illustrated the nature of Divine Grace, having cleared it from the spiritual dross of men's corrupt errors and false conceits, in the plainest manner I was able; so that the meanest capacities cannot either mistake the matter, or doubt of the known evidence wherewith it is ascertained and confirmed, both from the authorities of Scripture and unprejudiced reason. Here is sufficient matter and truth to employ the talents of the learned: whatever they may pretend to dispute upon this subject, in order to establish their several opinions, I will not be discouraged; but I most heartily and sincerely wish, it may be well received, and appear worthy of the reader's most serious reflections, having all the disadvantages of strong prejudices and long-received traditions to encounter and set aside; and may every one view it in a true and genuine light, to dispel the mists of darkness, and restore the brightness of divine truth and grace to the souls of men: for mankind must be extravagantly conceited,

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conceited, or void of understanding, who presume to ground their faith and practice upon such strange and unaccountable authorities, as the immediate aids and inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, without further considerations, and more manifest demonstrations of its certainty and divine power. *Vale, cave, et sape.*

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tend to ground their faith and practice upon
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divine power. Vol. 1. p. 104.

